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## NOTICE.

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MICHELET, in the present volume, has told more completely than any of his predecessors the early history of the French Revolution, with all the indications of a revolutionary character, which had from time to time prevailed in France during the preceding century: devoting more than six hundred pages to what Mignet discharges in about fifty. On the other hand, Mignet is sufficiently full on all that concerns the later period, until the Restoration of the Bourbons. The two volumes, therefore, of Michelet and Mignet, as presented in the Standard Library, form desirable companions. Those who choose to go deeper into this important history may follow up Michelet with Lamartine's "History of the Girondists."

H. G. B.

599212



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## PREFACE.

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EVERY year, when I descend from my chair, at the close of my academie labours, when I see the crowd disperse,—another generation that I shall behold no more,—my mind is lost in inward contemplation.

Summer comes on ; the town is less peopled, the streets are less noisy, the pavement grows more sonorous around my Pantheon. Its large black and white slabs resound beneath my feet.

I commune with my own mind. I interrogate myself as to my teaching, my history, and its all-powerful interpreter,—the spirit of the Revolution.

It possesses a knowledge of which others are ignorant. It contains the secret of all bygone times. In it alone France was conscious of herself. When, in a moment of weakness, we may appear forgetful of our own worth, it is to this point we should recur in order to seek and recover ourselves again. Here, the inextinguishable spark, the profound mystery of life, is ever glowing within us.

The Revolution lives in ourselves,—in our souls ; it has no outward monument. Living spirit of France, where shall I seize thee, but within myself?—The governments that have succeeded each other, hostile in all other respects, appear at least agreed in this, to resuscitate, to awaken remote and departed ages. But thee they would have wished to bury. Yet why? Thou, thou alone dost live.

Thou livest ! I feel this truth perpetually impressed upon me at the present period of the year, when my teaching is suspended, —when labour grows fatiguing, and the season

becomes oppressive, Then I wander to the Champ de Mars, I sit me down on the parched grass, and inhale the strong breeze that is wafted across the arid plain.

The Champ de Mars! This is the only monument that the Revolution has left. The Empire has its Column, and engrosses almost exclusively the arch of Triumph; royalty has its Louvre, its Hospital of Invalids; the feudal church of the twelfth century is still enthroned at Notre Dame: nay, the very Romans have their Imperial Ruins, the Thermæ of the Cæsars!

And the Revolution has for her monument—empty space.

Her monument is this sandy plain, flat as Arabia. A tumulus on either hand, resembling those which Gaul was accustomed to erect,—obscure and equivocal testimonial to her heroes' fame.

The Hero! do you mean him who founded the bridge of Jena? No, there is one here greater even than he, more powerful and more immortal, who fills this immensity.

“What God? We know not. But here a God doth dwell.”

Yes, though a forgetful generation dares to select this spot for the theatre of its vain amusements, borrowed from a foreign land,—though the English race-horse may gallop insolently over the plain, a mighty breath yet traverses it, such as you nowhere else perceive; a soul, and a spirit omnipotent.

And though that plain be arid, and the grass be withered, it will, one day, renew its verdure.

For in that soil is profoundly mingled the fruitful sweat of their brows who, on a sacred day, piled up those hills,—that day when, aroused by the cannon of the Bastille, France from the North and France from the South came forward and embraced; that day when three millions of heroes in arms rose with the unanimity of one man, and decreed eternal peace.

Alas! poor Revolution. How confidently on thy first day didst thou invite the world to love and peace. “O my enemies,” didst thou exclaim, “there are no longer any enemies!” Thou didst stretch forth thy hand to all, and offer them thy cup to drink to the peace of nations—But they would not.

And even when they advanced to inflict a treacherous wound, the sword drawn by France was the sword of peace. It was to deliver the nations, and give them true peace—liberty.



that she struck the tyrants. Dante asserts Eternal Love to be the founder of the gates of hell. And thus the Revolution wrote *Peace* upon her flag of war.

Her heroes, her invincible warriors, were the most pacific of human beings. Hoche, Marceau, Desaix, and Kleber, are deplored by friends and foes, as the champions of peace ; they are mourned by the Nile, and by the Rhine, nay, by war itself, —by the inflexible Vendée.

France had so completely identified herself with this thought, that she did her utmost to restrain herself from achieving conquests. Every nation needing the same blessing—liberty,—and pursuing the same right, whence could war possibly arise ? Could the Revolution, which, in its principle, was but the triumph of right, the resurrection of justice, the tardy reaction of thought against brute force,—could it, without provocation, have recourse to violence ?

This utterly pacific, benevolent, loving character of the Revolution seems to-day a paradox :—so unknown is its origin, so misunderstood its nature, and so obscured its tradition, in so short a time !

The violent, terrible efforts which it was obliged to make, in order not to perish in a struggle with the conspiring world, has been mistaken for the Revolution itself by a blind, forgetful generation.

And from this confusion has resulted a serious, deeply-rooted evil, very difficult to be cured among this people ; the adoration of force.

The force of resistance, the desperate effort to defend unity, '93. They shudder, and fall on their knees.

The force of invasion and conquest, 1800 ; the Alps brought low, and the thunder of Austerlitz. They fall prostrate, and adore.

Shall I add, that, in 1815, with too much tendency to over-value force, and to mistake success for a judgment of God, they found at the bottom of their hearts, in their grief and their anger, a miserable argument for justifying their enemy. Many whispered to themselves, “ they are strong, therefore they are just.”

Thus, two evils, the greatest that can afflict a people, fell upon France at once. Her own tradition slipped away from

her, she forgot herself. And, every day more uncertain, paler, and more fleeting, the doubtful image of Right flitted before her eyes.

Let us not take the trouble to inquire why this nation continues to sink gradually lower, and becomes more weak. Attribute not its decline to outward causes ; let it not accuse either heaven or earth ; the evil is in itself.

The reason why an insidious tyranny was able to render it a prey to corruption is, that it was itself corruptible. Weak and unarmed, and ready for temptation, it had lost sight of the idea by which alone it had been sustained ; like a wretched man deprived of sight, it groped its way in a miry road : it no longer saw its star. What ! the star of victory ? No, the sun of Justice and of the Revolution.

That the powers of darkness should have laboured throughout the earth to extinguish the light of France, and to smother Right, was natural enough. But, in spite of all their endeavours, success was impossible. The wonder is, that the friends of light should help its enemies to veil and extinguish it.

The party who advocate liberty have evinced, of late, two sad and serious symptoms of an inward evil. Let them permit a friend, a solitary writer, to tell them his entire mind.

A perfidious, an odious hand,—the hand of death,—has been offered and stretched out to them, and they have not withdrawn their own. They believed the foes of religious liberty might become the friends of political freedom. Vain scholastic distinctions, which obscured their view ! Liberty is liberty.

And to please their enemy, they have proved false to their friend—nay, to their own father, the grand eighteenth century. They have forgotten that that century had founded liberty on the enfranchisement of the mind—till then bound down by the flesh, bound by the material principle of the double incarnation, theological and political, kingly and sacerdotal. That century, that of the spirit, abolished the gods of flesh in the state and in religion, so that there was no longer any idol, and there was no god but God.

Yet why have sincere friends of liberty formed a league

with the party of religious tyranny? Because they had reduced themselves to a feeble minority. They were astonished at their own insignificance, and durst not refuse the advances of a great party which seemed to make overtures to them.

Our fathers did not act thus. They never counted their number. When Voltaire, a child, in the reign of Louis XIV. entered upon the perilous career of religious contention, he appeared to be alone. Rousseau stood alone, in the middle of the century, when, in the dispute between the Christians and the philosophers, he ventured to lay down the new dogma. He stood alone. On the morrow the whole world was with him.

If the friends of liberty see their numbers decreasing, they are themselves to blame. Not a few have invented a system of progressive refinement, of minute orthodoxy, which aims at making a party a sect,—a petty church. They reject first this, and then that; they abound in restrictions, distinctions, exclusions. Some new heresy is discovered every day.

For heaven's sake, let us dispute less about the light of Tabor, like besieged Byzantium—Mahomet II. is at our gates.

When the Christian sects became multiplied, we could find Jansenists, Molinists, &c., in abundance, but no longer any Christians; and so, the sects which are the offspring of the Revolution annul the Revolution itself; people became Constituants, Girondists, Montagnards; but the Revolutionists ceased to exist.

Voltaire is but little valued, Mirabeau is laid aside, Madame Roland is excluded, even Danton is not orthodox. What! must none remain but Robespierre and Saint-Just?

Without disowning what was in these men, without wishing to anticipate their sentence, let one word be sufficient here: If the Revolution rejects, condemns their predecessors, it rejects the very persons who gave it a hold upon mankind,—the very men who for a time imbued the whole world with a revolutionary spirit. If, on the other hand, it declares to the world its sympathy with their characters, and shews no more than the image of these two Apostles upon its altar, the conversion to its tenets will be slow, the French Propaganda will not have much to fear, and absolute governments may repose in peace.

Fraternity ! fraternity ! It is not enough to re-echo the word—to attract the world to our cause, as was the case at first. It must acknowledge in us a fraternal heart. It must be gained over by the fraternity of love, and not by the guillotine.

Fraternity ! Why who, since the creation, has not pronounced that word ? Do you imagine it was first coined by Robespierre or Mably ?

Every state of antiquity talked of fraternity ; but the word was addressed only to citizens,—to men ; the slave was but a thing. And in this case fraternity was exclusive and inhuman.

When slaves or freed-men govern the Empire,—when they are named Terence, Horace, Phedrus, Epictetus, it is difficult not to extend fraternity to the slave. “ Let us be brethren,” cries Christianity. But, to be a brother, one must first exist ; man had no being ; right and liberty alone constitute life. A theory from which these are excluded, is but a speculative fraternity between nought and nought.

“ Fraternity, *or death*,” as the reign of Terror subsequently exclaimed. Once more a brotherhood of slaves. Why, by atrocious derision, impart to such an union the holy name of liberty ?

Brethren who mutually fly from one another, who shudder when they meet, who extend, who withdraw a dead and icy hand. O odious and disgusting sight ! Surely, if anything ought to be free, it is the fraternal sentiment.

Liberty alone, as founded in the last century, has rendered fraternity possible. Philosophy found man without right, or rather a nonentity, entangled in a religious and political system, of which despotism was the base. And she said, “ Let us create man, let him *be*, by liberty.” No sooner was he created than he loved.

It is by liberty moreover, that our age, awakened and recalled to its true tradition, may likewise commence its work. It will no longer inscribe amongst its laws, “ Be my brother, *or die* !” But by a skilful culture of the best sentiments of the human soul, it will attain its ends in such a manner that all, without compulsion, shall wish to be brothers indeed. The state will realise its destiny, and be a fraternal initiation, an education,

a constant exchange of the spontaneous ideas of inspiration and faith, which are common to us all, and of the reflected ideas of science and meditation, which are found among thinkers.\*

Such is the task for our age to accomplish. May it at last set about the work in earnest!

It would indeed be a melancholy reflection, if, instead of achieving something great for itself, its time were wasted in censuring that age—so renowned for its labours, and to which it is so immensely indebted. Our fathers, we must repeat, did all that it was necessary then to do,—began precisely as it was incumbent on them to begin. ✓

They found despotism in heaven and on earth, and they instituted law. They found individual man disarmed, bare, unprotected, confounded, lost in a system of apparent unity, which was no better than common death. And in order that he might have no appeal, even to the supreme tribunal, the religious dogma of the day held him bound for the penalty of a transgression which he had not committed; this eminently carnal dogma supposed that injustice is transmitted with our blood from father to son.

It was necessary, above all things, to vindicate the rights of

\* Initiation, education, government, are three synonymous words. Rousseau had some notion of this, when, speaking of the states of antiquity, and of the crowd of great men produced by that little city of Athens, he says, "They were less governments than the most fruitful systems of education that have ever been." Unfortunately, the age of Rousseau invoking only deliberate *reason*, and but little analysing the faculties of instinct, of *inspiration*, could not well discern the mutual connexion which constitutes all the mystery of education, initiation, and government. The masters of the Revolution, the philosophers, famous antagonists, and very subtle, excellent logicians, were endowed with every gift, except that profound simplicity which alone enables one to comprehend the child and the people. Therefore, the Revolution could not organise the grand revolutionary machine: I mean that which, better than laws, ought to found fraternity—*education*. That will be the work of the nineteenth century; it has already entered upon it, in feeble attempts. In my little book *The People*,<sup>1</sup> I have, as far as in me lay, vindicated the rights of instinct—of inspiration—against her aristocratic sister, reflection, the reasoning science, that pretends to be the queen of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> See my translation of *Le Peuple* (London: Longman & Co., 1846), Part II., ch. v.

man, which were thus so cruelly outraged, and to reëstablish this truth, which, though obscured, was yet undeniable : “ Man has rights, he is something ; he cannot be disowned or annulled, even in the name of God ; he is a responsible creature but for his own actions alone, for whatever good or evil he himself commits.”

Thus does this false liability for the actions of others disappear from the world. The *unjust transmission of good*, perpetuated by the rights of the nobility ; the *unjust transmission of evil*, by original sin, or the civil brand of being descended from sinners, are effaced by the Revolution.

O men of the present age, is this the creed you tax with individualism—is this what you term an egotistical law ? But, remember, that without these rights of the individual, by which alone man was constituted, he really had no existence, was incapable of action, and man, therefore, could not fraternize. It was actually necessary to abolish the fraternity of death to found that of life.

Speak not of egotism. History will answer here, quite as strongly as logic. It was at the first moment of the Revolution, at the moment she was proclaiming the rights of the individual, it was then that the soul of France, far from shrinking, extended, embraced the whole world in sympathetic thought : then did she offer peace to all, and wish to participate with all her treasure,—liberty.

The moment of birth, the entrance upon a still dubious life, seems to justify a feeling of egotism in every being. We may observe that the newly-born infant, above all things, wishes to live, to prolong its existence. Yet, in the case before us, it was far otherwise. When young French Liberty first opened her eyes to the light, and uttered that earliest cry which transports every new creature,—“ I am ! ” even in that moment her thoughts were not confined to *self* ; she did not indulge in a selfish joy, she extended to mankind her life and her hope ; her first impulse, in her cradle, was to open her affectionate arms. “ I am ! ” she exclaimed to all nations ; “ O my brethren, you shall be also ! ”

In this lay her glorious error, her touching and sublime weakness : the Revolution, it must be confessed, commenced by loving everything.



She loved even her enemy,—England.

She loved, and long she strove to save, royalty—the key-stone of the abuses which she had just demolished. She wanted to save the Church ; she endeavoured to remain Christian, being wilfully blind to the contradiction of the old principle,—Arbitrary Grace, and of the new one,—Justice.

This universal sympathy which, at first, made her adopt, and indiscreetly mingle so many contradictory elements, led her to inconsistency,—to wish and not to wish, to do and undo, at the same time. Such is the strange result of our early assemblies.

The world has smiled at that work of hers : but let it not forget, that whatever was discordant in it, was partly owing to the too easy sympathy, to the indiscriminate benevolence which was the first feature in our Revolution.

Genius utterly humane ! I love to follow and watch its progress, in those admirable fêtes wherein a whole people, at once the actors and spectators, gave and received the impulse of moral enthusiasm ; wherein every heart expanded with all the sublimity of France,—of a country which, for its law, proclaimed the rights of humanity.

At the festival of the 14th of July, 1792, among the sacred images of Liberty and the Law,—in the civic procession,—in which figured, together with the magistrates, the representatives, the widows and orphans of those killed at the Bastille,—were seen divers emblems,—those of trades useful to men, instruments of agriculture, ploughs, sheaves, branches loaded with fruits ; and the bearers were crowned with ears of corn and green vine-leaves. But others also were seen in mourning, crowned with cypress ; they were carrying a table covered with crape, and, under the crape, a veiled sword,—that of the law ! A touching image ! Justice, showing her sword in mourning, was no longer distinguished from Humanity herself.

A year after, the 10th of August, 1793, a very different festival was celebrated. This one was heroic and gloomy. But the law had been mutilated ; the legislative power had been violated ; the judiciary power, unguaranteed and annulled, was the slave of violence. They durst no longer show the sword ; it was no longer that of Justice ; the eye could have borne it no longer.

A thing to be told to everybody, and which it is but too easy to prove, is, that the humane and benevolent period of our Revolution had for its actors the very people, the whole people, —everybody. And the period of violence, the period of sanguinary deeds, into which danger afterwards thrust it, had for actors but an inconsiderable, an extremely small number of men.

That is what I have found established and verified, either by written testimony, or by such as I have gathered from the lips of old men.

The remarkable exclamation of a man who belonged to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine will never die: "We were all of us at the 10th of August, and not one at the 2nd of September."

Another thing which this history will render most conspicuous, and which is true of every party, is, that the people were generally much better than their leaders. The further I have searched, the more generally have I found that the more deserving class was ever underneath, buried among the utterly obscure. I have also found that those brilliant, powerful speakers, who expressed the thoughts of the masses, are usually but wrongfully considered as the sole actors. The fact is, that they rather received than communicated the impulse. The chief actor is the people. In order to find and restore the latter to its proper position, I have been obliged to reduce to their proportions those ambitious puppets whom they had set in motion, and in whom, till now, people fancied they saw, and have sought for, the secret transactions of history.

This sight, I must confess, struck me with astonishment. In proportion as I entered more deeply into this study, I observed that the mere party leaders, those heroes of the prepared scene, neither foresaw nor prepared anything, that they were never the first proposers of any grand measure,—more particularly of those which were the unanimous work of the people in the outset of the Revolution.

Left to themselves, at those decisive moments, by their pretended leaders, they found out what was necessary to be done, and did it.

Great, astonishing results! But how much greater was the



heart which conceived them : The deeds themselves are as nothing in comparison. So astonishing, indeed, was that greatness of heart, that the future may draw upon it for ever, without fearing to exhaust its resources. No one can approach its contemplation, without retiring a better man. Every soul dejected, or crushed with grief, every human or national heart has but to look there in order to find comfort : it is a mirror wherein humanity, in beholding itself, becomes once more heroic, magnanimous, disinterested ; a singular purity, shrinking from the contamination of lucre as from filth, appears to be the characteristic glory of all.

I am endeavouring to describe to-day that epoch of unanimity, that holy period, when a whole nation, free from all party distinction, as yet a comparative stranger to the opposition of classes, marched together under a flag of brotherly love. Nobody can behold that marvellous unanimity, in which the self-same heart beat together in the breasts of twenty millions of men, without returning thanks to God. These are the sacred days of the world—thrice happy days for history. For my part, I have had my reward, in the mere narration of them. Never, since the composition of my *Maid of Orleans*, have I received such a ray from above, such a vivid inspiration from Heaven.

But as “our thread of life is of a mingled yarn,” whilst I enjoyed so much happiness in reviving the annals of France, my own peace has been disturbed for ever. I have lost him who so often narrated the scenes of the Revolution to me, him whom I revered as the image and venerable witness of the Grand Age, that is, of the eighteenth century. I have lost my father, with whom I had lived all my life,—forty-eight years.

When that blow fell upon me, I was lost in contemplation. I was elsewhere, hastily realizing this work, so long the object of my meditation. I was at the foot of the Bastille, taking that fortress, and planting our immortal banner upon its towers. That blow came upon me, unforeseen, like a shot from the Bastille.

Many of these important questions, which have obliged me to fathom deeply the foundations of my faith, have been investigated by me during the most awful circumstances that can attend human life, between death and the grave,—when the

survivor, himself partly dead, has been sitting in judgment between two worlds. Then I resumed my course, even to the conclusion of this work, whilst death and life had equal claims upon my mind. I struggled to keep my heart in the closest communion with justice, strengthening myself in my faith by my very bereavements and my hopes ; and, in proportion as my own household gods were shattered, I clung to the home of my native land.

# INTRODUCTION.

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## FIRST PART.

ON THE RELIGION OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

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### SECTION I.

IS THE REVOLUTION CHRISTIAN OR ANTI-CHRISTIAN ?

I DEFINE the Revolution,—The advent of the Law, the resurrection of Right, and the reaction of Justice.

Is the Law, such as it appeared in the Revolution, conformable, or contrary, to the religious law which preceded it? In other words, is the Revolution Christian or Anti-Christian ?

This question, historically, logically, precedes every other. It reaches and penetrates even those which might be believed to be exclusively political. All the institutions of the civil order which the Revolution met with, had either emanated from Christianity, or were traced upon its forms, and authorised by it. Religious or political, the two questions are deeply, inextricably intermingled. Confounded in the past, they will reappear to-morrow as they really are, one and identical.

Socialists' disputes, ideas which seem to-day new and paradoxical, were discussed in the bosom of Christianity and of the Revolution. There are few of those ideas into which the two systems have not deeply entered. The Revolution especially, in her rapid apparition, wherein she realised so little, saw, by the flashes of the lightning, unknown depths, abysses of the future.

Therefore, in spite of the developments which theories have been able to take, notwithstanding new forms and new words, I see upon the stage but two grand facts, two principles, two actors and two persons, Christianity and the Revolution.

He who would describe the crisis whence the new principle emerged and made room for itself, cannot dispense with inquiring what relation it bears to its predecessor, in *what respects* it continues or outsteps, sways or abolishes it:—a serious problem, which nobody has yet encountered face to face.

It is curious to see so many persons approaching, and yet nobody willing to look at this question seriously. Even those who believe, or pretend to believe, the question obsolete, show plainly enough, by their avoiding it, that it is extant, present, perilous, and formidable. If you are not afraid of the pit, why do you shrink back? Why do you turn aside your head? There is here, apparently, a power of dangerous attraction, at which the brain grows giddy.

Our great politicians have also, we must say, a mysterious reason for avoiding these questions. They believe that Christianity is still a great party, that it is better to treat it cautiously. Why fall out with it? They prefer to smile at it, keeping themselves at a distance, and to act politely towards it, without compromising themselves. They believe, moreover, that the religious world is generally very simple, and that to keep it in play, it is merely sufficient to praise the Gospel a little. That does not engage them very deeply. The Gospel, in its gentle morality, contains hardly any of the dogmas which make Christianity a religion so positive, so assuming, and so absorbing, so strong in its grasp upon man. All the philosophers, of every religion, of every philosophy, would subscribe, without difficulty, to the precepts of the Gospel. To say, with the Mahometans, that Jesus is a great prophet, is not being a Christian.

Does the other party expostulate? Does the zeal of God which devours them, fill their hearts with serious indignation against this trifling of politicians? Not so; they declaim much, but only about minor matters, being but too happy so long as they are not molested in what is fundamental. The conduct of politicians, often trifling and occasionally savouring of irony, does not grieve them much. They pretend not to

understand the question. Ancient as that party is, it has still a strong hold upon the world. Whilst their opponents are occupied in their parliamentary displays, ever rolling their useless wheel and exhausting themselves without advancing, that old party still holds possession of all that constitutes the basis of life—the family and the domestic hearth, woman, and, through her instrumentality, the child. They who are the most hostile to this party, nevertheless abandon to its influence all they love, and all that makes them happy. They surrender to it every day the infant, man unarmed and feeble, whose mind, still dreaming, is incapable of defending itself. This gives the party many chances. Let it but keep and fortify this vast, mute, undisputed empire, its ease is all the better ; it may grumble and complain, but it will take good care never to drive politicians to a statement of their belief.

Politicians on either side ! connivance against connivance ! Where shall I turn to find the friends of truth ?

The friends of the holy and the just ? Does the world then contain no one who cares for God ?

Children of Christianity, you who claim to be faithful, we here adjure you. Thus to pass by God in silence, to omit in every disputation what is truly the faith, as something too dangerous, offensive to the ear—is this religion ?

One day, when I was conversing with one of our best bishops on the contradictions between Grace and Justice, which is the very basis of the Christian faith, he stopped me and said : “ This question luckily no longer engages the attention of men. On that subject we enjoy repose and silence. Let us maintain it, and never go beyond. It is superfluous to return to that discussion.”

Yet that discussion, my lord, is no less than the question, whether Grace and Salvation through Christ, the only basis of Christianity, is reconcilable with justice ; it is to examine whether such a dogma is founded on justice, whether it can subsist. Nothing lasts against justice. Does, then, the duration of Christianity appear to you an accessory question ?

I well know, that after a debate of several centuries, after heaps of distinctions and scholastic subtleties had been piled together, without throwing light on the question, the pope silenced all parties, judging, like my bishop, that the question

might be laid aside with no hope of settling the matter, and leaving justice and injustice in the arena to make up matters as they could.

This is much more than has ever been done by the greatest enemies of Christianity. To say the least, they have always been respectful enough to examine the question, and not put it out of court without deigning to grant it a hearing.

For how could we, who have no inimical feelings, reject examination and debate? Ecclesiastical prudence, the trifling of politicians, and their avoiding the question, do not suit us in the least. We owe it to Christianity to see how far it may be reconcileable with the Revolution, to know what regeneration the old principle may find in the bosom of the new one. We have desired fervently and heartily that it would transform itself and live again! In what sense can this transformation be achieved? What hope ought we to entertain that it is possible?

As the historian of the Revolution, I cannot, without this inquiry, advance one step. But even though I were not invincibly impelled towards it by the very nature of my subject, I should be urged to the investigation by my own heart. The miserable reluctance to grapple with the difficulty which either party evinces, is one of the overwhelming causes of our moral debasement,—a combat of condottieri, in which nobody fights; they advance, retire, menace, without touching one another,—contemptible sight! As long as fundamental questions remain thus eluded, there can be no progress, either religious or social. The world is waiting for a faith, to march forward again, to breathe and to live. But, never can faith have a beginning in deceit, cunning, or treaties of falsehood.

Single-handed and free from prejudices, I will attempt, in my weakness, what the strong do not venture to perform. I will fathom the question from which they recoil, and I shall attain, perhaps, before I die, the prize of life; namely, to discover the truth, and to tell it according to one's heart.

Engaged as I am in the task of describing the heroic days of Liberty, I may venture to entertain a hope that she herself may deign to support me,—accomplish her own work through the medium of this my book, and lay the deep foundation upon which a better age may build the faith of the future.

## SECTION II.

## IS THE REVOLUTION THE FULFILLING OF CHRISTIANITY?

SEVERAL eminent writers, with a laudable wish for peace and reconciliation, have lately affirmed that the Revolution was but the accomplishment of Christianity,—that it came to continue and to realize the latter, and to make good all it had promised.\*

If this assertion be well founded, the eighteenth century, the philosophers, the precursors, the masters of the Revolution, have grievously erred, and have acted very differently from their real intentions. Generally, they aimed at anything rather than the accomplishment of Christianity.

If the Revolution consisted in that, and nothing more, it would then not be distinct from Christianity, but the actual time of its existence, its virile age—its age of reason. It would be nothing in itself. In this case, there would not be two actors, but one,—Christianity. If there be but one actor, then no drama, no crisis; the struggle we believe we see, is a mere illusion; the world seems to be agitated, but, in reality, is motionless.

But no, it is not so. The struggle is but too real. There is no sham fight here between one and the same person. There are two distinct combatants.

Neither must it be said that the new principle is but a criticism on the old one,—a doubt, a mere negation. Who ever saw a negation? What is a living, an acting negation, one that vivifies like this? A world sprang forth from it yesterday. No: in order to produce, there must be existence.

Therefore, there are two things here, and not one,—it is impossible to deny it. There are two principles, two spirits—the old and the new.

In vain the former, confident of life, and for this reason so much the more pacific, would whisper to the latter: “I come to fulfil, and not to abolish.” The old principle has no manner of wish to be *fulfilled*. The very word sounds ominous and

\* See, among other works, Quinet’s “*Christianity and the French Revolution*.” (London, Longman & Co., 1846.)—C. C.



sepulchral; it rejects that filial benediction, and desires neither tears nor prayers; it flings aside the branch that is shaken over it.

We must keep clear of misunderstandings, if we would know whither we are going.

✓ The Revolution continues Christianity, and it contradicts it. It is, at the same time, its heir and its adversary.

In sentiment, and in all that is general and human between them, the two principles agree, but in all that constitutes very and special life,—in the operations of the mind, from which both derive their birth,—they are adverse and thwart each other.

They agree in the sentiment of human fraternity. This sentiment, born with man,—with the world, common to every society, has nevertheless been made more extensive and profound by Christianity. This is its glory, its eternal palm. It found fraternity confined to the banquets of ancient states; it extended its influence, and spread it throughout the vast Christian world. In her turn, the Revolution, the daughter of Christianity, has taught its lessons to the whole world, to every race, and to every religion under the sun.

This is the whole of the resemblance. Now for the difference.

The Revolution founds fraternity on the love of man for man, on mutual duty,—on Right and Justice. This base is fundamental, and no other is necessary.

It did not seek to add to this certain principle one derived from dubious history. It did not ground fraternity on a common relationship,—a filiation which transmits, with our blood, the participation of crime from father to son.

This carnal, material principle, which introduces justice and injustice into the blood, and transmits them, with the tide of life, from one generation to another, violently contradicts the spiritual notion of Justice which is implanted in the depths of the human soul. No; Justice is not a fluid, to be transmitted with generation. Will alone is just or unjust; the heart alone feels itself responsible. Justice is entirely in the soul; the body has nothing to do with it.

This barbarous material starting-point is astounding in a religion that has carried the subtlety of the dogma farther than any other. It impresses upon the whole system a profound



character of arbitrariness, from which no subtlety will be able to extricate it. Arbitrariness reaches, penetrates the developments of the dogma, all the religious institutions which are derived from it; and, lastly, the civil order, which, in the middle ages, is itself derived from those institutions, imitates its forms and is swayed by its spirit.

Let us consider this grand sight:

I. The starting-point is this: Crime comes from one, salvation from one; Adam has lost, Christ has saved.

He has saved! Why? Because he would save. No other motive. No virtue, no work of man, no human merit can deserve this prodigious sacrifice of God sacrificing himself. He gives himself, but for nothing: that is the miracle of love; he asks of man no work,—no anterior merit.

II. What does he require in return for this immense sacrifice? One single thing: people to believe in him, to believe themselves indeed saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Faith is the condition of salvation, and not the works of Righteousness.)

No Righteousness without faith. Whoever does not believe is unrighteous. Is righteousness without faith of any use? No.

Saint Paul, in laying down this principle of salvation by faith alone, has unsuited Righteousness. Henceforth she is, at most, only an accessory, a sequel, one of the effects of faith.

III. Having once quitted Righteousness, we must ever go on descending into Necessity.

Believe, or perish! The question being thus laid down, people discover with terror that they will perish, that salvation is attached to a condition independent of the will. We do not believe as we will.

Saint Paul had laid down that man can do nought by good works, but only by faith. Saint Augustine demonstrates his insufficiency in faith itself. God alone gives it; he gives it even gratuitously, without requiring anything, neither faith nor justice. This *gratuitous* gift, this *grace*, is the only cause of salvation. God gives *grace* to whom he pleases. Saint Augustine has said: "I believe, because it is absurd." He might also say in this system: "I believe, because it is unjust."

Necessity goes no further. The system is consummated. God loves; no other explanation; he loves whom he pleases.

the least of all, the sinner, the least deserving. Love is its own reason ; it requires no merit.

What then would be *merit*, if we may still employ this word ? To be loved, the elect of God, predestined to salvation.

And *demerit*, damnation ! To be hated by God, condemned beforehand, created for damnation.

Alas ! we believed just now that humanity was saved. The sacrifice of a God seemed to have blotted out the sins of the world. No more judgment, no more justice. Blind that we were ! we were rejoicing, believing justice drowned in the blood of Jesus Christ. And lo ! judgment re-appears more harsh,—a judgment without justice, or at least the justice of which will be hidden from us for ever. The elect of God, the favourite, receives from him, with the gift of faith, the gift of doing good works,—the gift of salvation. That justice should be a gift ! For our part, we had thought it was active, the very act of the will. Yet here we have it passive, transmitted as a present, from God to the elect of his heart.

This doctrine, made into a formula more severely by the Protestants, is no less that of the Catholic world, such as it is acknowledged by the Council of Trent.

If *grace* (it says with the apostle) were not *gratuitous*, as its very name implies, if it ought to be merited by works of righteousness, it would be righteousness, and no longer grace. (*Conc. Trid.*, sess. vi. cap. viii.)

Such, says that council, has been the permanent belief of the church. And it could not be otherwise ; it is the groundwork of Christianity ; beyond that, there is philosophy, but no longer religion. The latter is the religion of grace,—of gratuitous, arbitrary salvation, and of the good pleasure of God.

Great was the embarrassment when Christianity, with this doctrine opposed to justice, was called to govern, to judge the world,—when Jurisprudence descended from her prætorium, and said to the new faith : “ Judge in my place.”

Then were people able to see at the bottom of this doctrine, which seemed to be sufficient for the world, an abyss of insufficiency, uncertainty, and discouragement.

If he remained faithful to the principle that salvation is a gift, and not the reward of Justice, man would have folded his arms, sat down, and waited ; for well he knew that his works

could have no influence on his lot. All moral activity ceased in this world. And how could civil life, order, human justice, be maintained? God loves, and no longer judges. How shall man judge? Every judgment, religious or political, is a flagrant contradiction in a religion founded solely on a dogma foreign to justice.

Without justice one cannot live. Therefore, the Christian world must put up with the contradiction. This introduces into many things something false and wrong; and this double position is only surmounted by means of hypocritical formulæ. The church judges, yet judges not; kills, yet kills not. She has a horror of shedding blood; therefore she burns—What do I say? She does not burn. She hands over the culprit to another to burn, and adds moreover a little prayer, as if to intercede—a terrible comedy, wherein Justice, false and cruel justice, assumes the mask of grace!

A strange punishment of the excessive ambition which desired more than justice, and yet despised it! This church has remained without justice. When, in the middle ages, she sees the latter reviving again, she wants to draw nearer to her. She tries to speak like her, to assume her language; she avows that man can do something towards his salvation by works of righteousness. Vain efforts! Christianity can be reconciled with Papinian only by withdrawing from Saint Paul—quitting its proper base, and leaning aside at the risk of losing its equilibrium and being dashed to atoms.

Having Necessity for a starting-point, this system must remain in Necessity; it cannot step beyond it.\* All the

\* At the present day, people despair of reconciling these different views. They no longer attempt to make peace between the dogma and justice. They manage matters better. Now they show it, now they conceal it. To simple confiding persons, to women, to children, whom they keep docile and obedient, they teach the old doctrine which places a terrible arbitrariness in God and in the man of God, and gives up the trembling creature defenceless to the priest. This terror is ever the faith and the law of the latter; the sword ever remains keen-edged for those poor hearts.

If, on the contrary, they speak to the strong, to thinkers and politicians, they suddenly become indulgent: "Is Christianity, after all, anywhere but in the Gospel? Are faith and philosophy so at variance? The old dispute between Grace and Justice (that is, the question to know whether Christianity be just) is quite obsolete."

This double policy has two effects, and both fatal. It weighs heavily upon

spurious attempts by which schoolmen, and others also since their time, have vainly attempted to institute a dogma founded upon reason, that is to say, a philosophical and jurist Christianity, must be discarded. They are devoid alike of virtue and strength. We can take no notice of them; they have passed into silence and oblivion. We must examine the system in itself, in its terrible purity, which constituted all its strength; we must follow it through its reign in the middle ages, and, above all things, mark its progress at the period when at length fixed, armed, and inflexible, it exercised a sway over the whole world.

A sombre doctrine this, which, at the destruction of the Roman empire, when civil order perished and human justice was, as it were, effaced, shut out all appeal to the supreme tribunal, and for a thousand years veiled the face of eternal justice.

The iniquity of conquest confirmed by decrees from God, becomes authorised and believes itself just. The conquerors are the elect, the conquered are the damned. Damnation without appeal. Ages may pass away and conquest be forgotten; but Heaven, devoid of justice, will not the less oppress the earth, though formed in its own image. Necessity, which constitutes the basis of this theology, will everywhere reappear with desperate fidelity in the political institutions, even in those wherein man had thought to build an asylum for justice. All monarchies, divine and human, govern for their elect.

Where then shall man take refuge? Grace reigns alone in heaven, and favour here below. That Justice, twice proscribed and banished, should venture to raise her head, requires indeed a difficult effort (so completely is the common sense of man extinguished beneath the weight of woes and the oppression of ages); it is necessary, in fact, that Justice should once more believe herself just, that she should arouse, remember herself,

woman, upon the child, upon the family, in which it creates discord, maintaining in opposition two contrary authorities,—two fathers.

It weighs heavily upon the world by a negative power, which does little, but which impedes, especially by the facility of presenting either of two aspects,—to some the elastic morality of the Gospel, to others immutable fatality, adorned with the name of grace. Hence, many a misunderstanding. Hence, many are tempted to connect modern faith,—that of Justice and the Revolution,—with the dogma of ancient injustice.

and resume the consciousness of right. This consciousness, slowly endeavouring to awake throughout a period of six centuries of religious efforts, burst forth in the year '89 in the political and social world.

The Revolution is nothing but the tardy reaction of justice against the government of favour and the religion of grace.

### SECTION III.

#### LEGENDS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

If you have sometimes travelled among mountains, you may perhaps have observed the same spectacle which I once met with.

From among a confused heap of rocks piled together, amid a landscape diversified with trees and verdure, towered a gigantic peak. That object, black, bare, and solitary, was but too evidently thrown up from the deep bowels of the earth. Enlivened by no verdure, no season changed its aspect; the very birds would hardly venture to alight on it, as if they feared to singe their wings on touching the mass which was projected from earth's central fire. That gloomy evidence of the throes of the interior world seemed still to muse over the scene, regardless of surrounding objects, without ever rousing from its savage melancholy.

What were then the subterraneous revolutions of the earth, what incalculable powers combated in its bosom, for that mass, disturbing mountains, piercing through rocks, shattering beds of marble, to burst forth to the surface! What convulsions, what agony forced from the entrails of the globe that prodigious groan!

I sat down, and from my eyes tears of anguish, slow and painful, began to flow. Nature had but too well reminded me of history. That chaos of mountain heaps oppressed me with the same weight which had crushed the heart of man throughout the middle ages; and in that desolate peak, which from her inmost bowels the earth had hurled towards heaven, I saw pictured the despair and the cry of the human race.

That Justice should have borne for a thousand years that mountain of dogma upon her heart, and, crushed beneath its weight, have counted the hours, the days, the years, so

many long years—is, for him who knows it, a source of eternal tears. He who through the medium of history has participated in that long torture, will never entirely recover from it; whatever may happen he will be sad; the sun, the joy of the world, will never more afford him comfort; he has lived too long in sorrow and in darkness; and my very heart bled in contemplating the long resignation, the meekness, the patience, and the efforts of humanity to love that world of hate and malediction under which it was crushed.

When man, resigning liberty and justice as something useless, entrusted himself blindly to the hands of Grace, and saw it becoming concentrated on an imperceptible point,—that is to say the privileged, the elect,—and saw all other beings, whether on earth or under the earth, lost for eternity, you would suppose there arose everywhere a howl of blasphemy!—No, only a groan.

And these affecting words: “If thou wilt that I be damned, thy will be done, O Lord!”

Then peaceful, submissive, and resigned, they folded themselves in the shroud of damnation!

This is, indeed, serious, worthy of remembrance; a thing which theology had never foreseen. It had taught that the damned could do nothing but hate. But these still loved. These damned souls trained themselves to love the elect, their masters. The priest, the lord, those chosen children of heaven, found, for ages, only meekness, docility, love, and confidence in that humble people. They served, they suffered, in silence; trod upon, they returned thanks; they did not sin even with their lips, as did the saintly Job.

What preserved them from death? One thing, we must say, which reanimated, refreshed the sufferer in his long torment. That astonishing meekness of soul which he preserved, gave him bliss; from that heart, so wounded, yet so good, sprung a living source of lovely and tender fancy, a flood of popular religion to counteract the dryness of the other. Watered by those fruitful streams, the legend flourished and grew; it shaded the unfortunate with its compassionate flowers—flowers of the native soil, blossoms of the fatherland, which somewhat refreshed and occasionally buried in oblivion Byzantine ætaphysics and the theology of death.



Yet death was beneath those flowers. The patron, the good saint of the place, was not potent enough to defend his *protégé* against a dogma of dread. The Devil hardly waited till man expired in order to seize him. He beset him living. He was the lord of this world ; man was his property, his fief. It appeared so but too plainly in the social order of the time.

What a constant temptation to despair and doubt ! How bondage here below was, with all its miseries, the beginning,—the foretaste of eternal damnation ! First, a life of suffering ; next, for consolation, hell !—Damned beforehand !—Then, wherefore those comedies of Judgment represented in the church-porehes ! Is it not barbarous to keep in uncertainty, in dreadful anxiety, ever suspended over the abyss, him who, before his birth, is adjudged to the bottomless pit, is due to it, and belongs to it ?

Before his birth !—The infant, the innocent, created expressly for hell ! Nay, did I say the innocent ? This is the horror of the system ; innocence is no more. I know not, but I boldly and unhesitatingly affirm this to be the insoluble knot at which the human soul stopped short, and patience was staggered.

The infant damned ! I have elsewhere pointed out that deep, frightful wound of the maternal heart. I pointed it out, and again drew the veil over it. In exploring its depths we should find there much more than the terrors of death.

Thence it was, believe me, that the first sigh arose. Of protestation ? No ! And yet, unknown to the heart whence it escaped, there was a terrible remonstrance in that humble, low, agonising groan.

So low, but so heart-rending ! The man who heard it at night, slept no more—not for many a night after : and in the morning, before day-light, he went to his furrow ; and there found many things were changed. He found the valley and the field of labour lower—much lower,—deep, like a sepulchre ; and the two towers in the horizon more lofty—more gloomy and heavy ; gloomy the church-steeple, and dismal the feudal castle. Then he began to comprehend the sounds of the two bells. The church-bell murmured, *Ever* ; that of the donjon, *Never*. But, at the same time, a mighty voice spoke louder in his heart. That voice cried, *One day !* And that was the voice of God ! *One day* justice shall return ! Leave

those idle bells ; let them prate to the wind. Be not alarmed with thy doubt. That doubt is already faith. Believe, hope ! Right, though postponed, shall have its advent ; it will come to sit in judgment, on the dogma and on the world. And *that day* of Judgment will be called the Revolution.

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## SECTION IV.

### THE CLERGY AND THE PEOPLE.

I HAVE often asked myself, whilst pursuing the dismal study of the middle ages, through paths full of thorns "*tristis usque ad mortem*," how a religion, which is the mildest in its principle, and has its starting-point in love itself, could ever have covered the world with that vast sea of blood ?

Pagan antiquity, entirely warlike, murderous, and destructive, had been lavish of human life, unconscious of its value. Youthful and merciless, beautiful and cold, like the virgin of Tauris, she killed and remained unmoved. You do not find in her grand immolations so much passion, inveteracy, or fury of hate, as characterise, in the middle ages, the combats and the vengeance of the religion of love.

The first reason which I have assigned for this, in my book *Du Prêtre*, is the prodigious intoxication of pride which this belief gives to its elect. What maddening dizziness ! Every day, to make God descend upon the altar, to be obeyed by God !—Shall I say it ? (I hesitated for fear of blaspheming) *to make God !* How shall he be called who does this miracle of miracles every day ? A God ? That would not be enough.

The more strange, unnatural, and monstrous this greatness, the more uneasy and full of misgiving is he who pretends to it : he seems to me as though he were sitting on the steeple of Strasburg, upon the point of the cross. Imagine his hatred and violence towards any man who dares to touch him, shake him, or try and make him descend !—Descend ? There is no descending. He must fall from such a place,—he must fall ; but so heavy is the fall, that it would bury him into the earth.

Be well convinced that if, in order to maintain himself, he



can suppress the world with a nod ; if what God created with one word, he can exterminate with one word, the world is annihilated.

This state of uneasiness, anger, and trembling hate explains alone the incredible fury of the church in the middle ages, in proportion as she beheld her rival, Justice, arise against her.

The latter was scarcely perceptible at first. Nothing was so low, so minute, so humble. A paltry blade of grass, forgotten in the furrow ; even stooping, you would hardly have perceived it.

Justice, thou who wast lately so feeble, how canst thou grow so fast ! If I but turn aside a moment, I know thee no longer. I find thee every hour grown ten cubits higher. Theology quakes, reddens with anger, and turns pale.

Then begins a terrible, frightful struggle, beyond the power of language to express. Theology flinging aside the demure mask of grace, abdicating, denying herself, in order to annihilate Justice, striving to absorb—to destroy her within herself, to swallow her up. Behold them standing face to face ; which of them, at the end of this mortal combat, is found to have absorbed, incorporated, assimilated the other ?

Let the revolutionary reign of Terror beware of comparing herself with the Inquisition. Let her never boast of having, in her two or three years, paid back to the old system what it did to us for six hundred years ! The Inquisition would have good cause to laugh ! What are the twelve thousand men guillotined of the one, to the millions of men butchered, hung, broken on the wheel,—to that pyramid of burning stakes,—to those masses of burnt flesh, which the other piled up to heaven. The single Inquisition of one of the provinces of Spain states, in an authentic monument, that in sixteen years it burned twenty thousand men ! But why speak of Spain, rather than of the Albigenes, of the Vaudois of the Alps, of the Beggars of Flanders, of the Protestants of France, or of the horrible crusade against the Hussites, and so many nations whom the pope abandoned to the sword ?

History will inform us that in her most ferocious and implacable moments the Revolution trembled at the thought of aggravating death, that she shortened the sufferings of victims, removed the hand of man, and invented a machine to abridge the pangs of death.

And it will also inform us that the church of the middle ages exhausted herself in inventions to augment suffering, to render it poignant, intense ; that she found out exquisite arts of torture, ingenious means to contrive that, without dying, one might long taste of death—and that, being stopped in that path by inflexible nature, who, at a certain degree of pain, mercifully grants death, she wept at not being able to make man suffer longer.

I cannot, I will not agitate that sea of blood. If God allow me one day to touch it, that blood shall boil again with life, flow in torrents to drown false history and the hired flatterers of murder, to fill their lying mouths.

Well do I know that the greater part of those grand butcheries can no longer be related. They have burnt the books, burnt the men, burnt the calcined bones over again, and flung away the ashes. When, for instance, shall I recover the history of the Vaudois, or of the Albigenses ? The day when I shall have the history of the star that I saw falling to-night. A world, a whole world has sunk, perished, both men and things. A poem has been recovered, and bones have been found at the bottom of caverns ; but no names, no signs. Is it with these sad remnants that I can form that history again ? Let our enemies triumph that they have rendered us powerless, and at having been so barbarous that one cannot, with certainty, recount their barbarities ! At least the desert speaks,—the desert of Languedoc, the solitudes of the Alps, the unpeopled mountains of Bohemia, and so many other places, where man has disappeared, where the earth has become sterile for ever, and where Nature, after man, seems itself exterminated.

But one thing cries louder than all their destructions (and this one thing is authentic), which is, that the system which killed in the name of a principle, in the name of a faith, made use indifferently of two opposite principles,—the tyranny of kings, and the blind anarchy of nations. In one single century, the sixteenth, Rome changed three times, throwing herself now to the right, now to the left, without either prudence or decency. First, she gives herself up to the kings ; next, she throws herself into the arms of the people ; then again, she returns to the kings. Three lines of policy, but one aim. How attained ? No matter. What aim ? To destroy the power of thought.

A writer has discovered that the pope's nuncio had no foreknowledge of the Saint Bartholomew (massacre). And I have discovered that the pope had prepared it,—worked at it, for ten years.

“A trifle,” says another, “a mere local affair, a vengeance of Paris.”

In spite of the utter disgust, the contempt, the sickness, which these theories occasion me, I have confronted them with the records of history, with unexceptionable documents. And I have found far and near, the blood-red traces of the massacre. I can prove that, from the day when Paris proposed (1561) the general sale of the goods of the clergy, from the day when the church beheld the king wavering, and tempted by the hopes of that booty, she turned hastily, violently towards the people, and employed every means in her power, by preaching, by alms, by different influences, and by her immense connection, her converts, trades-people, and mendicants, to organize the massacre.

“A popular affair,” say you. True. But tell us also by what diabolical scheme, by what infernal perseverance, you worked during the space of ten years to pervert the understanding of the people, to excite and drive them mad.

O spirit of cunning and murder! I have lived too many centuries in face of thee, throughout the middle ages, for thee ever to deceive me. After having so long denied justice and liberty, thou didst assume their name for thy shout of war. In their name thou didst work a rich mine of hate,—that eternal repining which inequality implants in the heart of man, the envy of the poor for the rich. Thou tyrant, thou proprietor, and the most ravenous in the world, didst unhesitatingly embrace on a sudden, and exceed, with one bound, the most impracticable theories of the Levellers.

Before the Saint Bartholomew massacre, the clergy used to say to the people, in order to excite them, “The Protestants *are nobles*, provincial gentlemen.” That was true; the clergy having already exterminated, stifled Protestantism in the towns. The castles alone being shut, were still able to remain Protestant. But read of their earlier martyrs; they were the inhabitants of towns, petty tradesmen, and workmen. Those creeds which were pointed out to the hatred of people as those of the

aristocracy, had sprung from the very people. Who does not know that Calvin was the son of a cooper?

It would be too easy for me to show how all this has been misrepresented in our time by writers subservient to the clergy, and then copied without consideration. I wanted only to show, by one example, the ferocious address with which the clergy urged the people, and made for themselves a deadly weapon of social jealousy. The detail would be curious; I regret to postpone it. I could tell you the plans resorted to, in order to work the ruin of an individual—or a set of men; calumny, skilfully directed by a special press, slowly manipulated in the schools and seminaries, especially in the parlours of convents, directly intrusted (in order to be more quickly diffused) to penitents, to the suborned trades-people of the curates and canons, was put in motion among the people. How it worked itself into fury in those establishments of gluttony, termed Brotherhoods, to which, among other things, they abandoned the immense wealth of the hospitals. Low, paltry, miserable details, but without which the wholesale murders perpetrated by a Catholic rabble would remain incomprehensible.

Occasionally, if it was sought to destroy a man of repute, superior art was added to these manœuvres. By means of money or intimidation, some talented writer was found and let loose upon him. Thus, the king's confessor, to succeed in getting Vallée burnt, made Ronsard write against him. And so to ruin Théophile, the confessor instigated Balzac, who could not forgive Théophile for having drawn his sword for him, and saved him from personal chastisement.

In our own times, I have had an opportunity of noticing how the same set, in the name of the Church, arouse and foster hatred and disturbance in the breasts of the obscure and lower orders,—the very dregs of society. I once saw, in a city of the west, a young professor of philosophy, whom the ecclesiastics wanted to expel from his chair, followed, and pointed at in the street by a mob of women. What did they know about philosophical questions? Nothing, save what they were taught in the confessional. They were not less furious on that account, standing before their doors, pointing, and shouting: "There he is!"

In a large city in the eastern department, I was witness

to another, and, perhaps, still more odious spectacle. An old Protestant pastor, almost blind, who, every day, and often several times in the day, was followed and insulted by the children of a school, who pulled him behind, and strove to throw him down.

That is their usual way of beginning their game; by innocent agents, against whom you cannot defend yourself,—little children, women. On more favourable occasions, in unenlightened provinces, easy to be excited, men take a share in the game. The master, who holds to the church, as a member of some *confrérie*, as a tradesman or a lodger, grumbles, shouts, cabals, and collects a mob. The journeyman and the valet get drunk to do mischief; the apprentice follows—surpasses them—strikes, without knowing why,—the very children sometimes assassinate.

Next come false reasoners, foolish theorists, to baptize this pious assassination with the name of *justice of the people*, to canonize the crime perpetrated by tyrants in the name of liberty.

Thus it was, that, in the selfsame day, they found means to slaughter, with one blow, all that formed the honour of France, the first philosopher of the age, the first sculptor, and the first musician,—Ramus, Jean Goujon, and Goudimel. How much rather would they have butchered our great juriconsult, the enemy of Rome and the Jesuits, the genius of right,—Dumoulin!

Happily, he was safe. He had spared them a crime; his noble life had taken refuge in God. But, before that time, he had seen riots organised four times by the clergy against him and his home. That holy temple of study four times violated and pillaged, his books profaned and dispersed, his manuscripts, irreparable patrimony of mankind, flung into the gutter and destroyed. They have not destroyed Justice; the living spirit contained in those books was emancipated by the flames; it expanded and pervaded everything, impregnating the very atmosphere, so that, thanks to the murderous fury of fanaticism, they could breathe no air but that of equity.

## SECTION V.

## HOW FREE-THINKERS ESCAPED.

AFTER a grand festival, a great carnage in the Coliseum at Rome, when the sand had been moistened with blood, and the lions were lying down, cloyed, surfeited with human flesh, then, in order to divert the people, to distract their attention a little, a farce was enacted. An egg was put into the hand of a miserable slave condemned to the wild beasts; and then he was cast into the arena. If he managed to reach the end, if, by good fortune, he succeeded in carrying his egg and laying it upon the altar, he was saved. The distance was not great, but how far it seemed to him! Those brutes, glutted, asleep, or just going to sleep, would, nevertheless, at the sound of the light footstep, raise their heavy eyelids, and yawn fearfully, in doubt apparently whether they ought to interrupt their repose for such ridiculous prey. He, half dead with fear, stooping, shrinking, cringing, as if to sink into the earth, would have exclaimed, doubtless, could he have given utterance to his thought: "Alas! alas! noble lions, I am so meagre! Pray allow this living skeleton to pass; it is a meal unworthy of you." Never did any buffoon, any mimic, produce such an effect upon the people; the extraordinary comical contortions and agonies of fear convulsed all the spectators with laughter; they rolled on their benches in the excess of their mirth; it was a fearful tempest of merriment—a roar of joy.

I am obliged to say, in spite of every consideration, that this spectacle was revived towards the close of the middle ages, when the old principle, furious at the thought of dying, imagined it would still have time to annihilate human thought. Once more, as in the Coliseum, miserable slaves were seen carrying among wild beasts, uncloyed, unglutted, furious, atrocious and ravenous, the poor little deposit of proscribed truth,—the fragile egg which might save the world, if it reached the altar.

Others will laugh—and woe to them! But I can never laugh on beholding that spectacle—that farce, those contortions those efforts to deceive, to dupe, the growling monsters, t:



amuse that unworthy multitude, wound me to the heart. Those slaves whom I see passing yonder across the bloody arena, are the sovereigns of the mind, the benefactors of the human race. O my fathers, O my brethren, Voltaire, Molière, Rabelais, beloved of my thoughts, it is you whom I behold trembling, suffering and ridiculous, under that sad disguise! Sublime geniuses, privileged to bear the sacred gift of God, have you then accepted, on our account, that degraded martyrdom to be the buffoons of fear?

Degraded!—Oh! no, never! From the centre of the amphitheatre they addressed me in a kind voice: “Friend, what matters if they laugh at us? What do we care at being devoured by wild beasts, at suffering the outrage of cruel men, if we but reach the goal, provided this dear treasure, laid safely upon the altar, be recovered by mankind, whom it will save sooner or later. Do you know what this treasure is?—Liberty, Justice, Truth, Reason.” ✓

When we reflect by what imperceptible degrees, through what difficulties and obstacles, every grand design is accomplished, we are less surprised on beholding the humiliation, the degradation, to which its originator is often subjected. Who would undertake the task of following, from unknown depths to the surface, the progress of a thought? Who can tell the confused forms, the modifications, the fatal delays it has to undergo for ages? With what slow steps does it emerge from instinct to musing, to reveie, and thence to the poetical chiaro-oscuro! How long is its progress confined to children and fools, to poets and madmen? And yet one day that madness proves to be the common sense of all! But this is not enough. All men think, but nobody dares speak.—Why? Is courage wanting?—Yes; and why is it wanting?—Because the discovered truth is not yet clear enough; it must first shine out in all its splendour for people to become its martyrs. At length it bursts forth luminous in some genius, and it renders him heroic; it inflames him with devotion, love, and sacrifice. He lays it to his heart and goes among the lions.

Hence that strange spectacle which I beheld just now, that sublime yet terrible farce. Look, see how he quakes as he passes, humble and trembling; how he clasps, conceals, presses something to his heart. Oh! he trembles not for himself.—

Glorious trepidation ! heroic fear ! See you not that he is carrying the salvation of mankind ?

Only one thing gives me uneasiness.—Where is the place of refuge in which that deposit is to be concealed ? What altar is sacred enough to guard that holy treasure ? And what god is sufficiently divine to protect what is no less than the conception of God himself ? Great men, ye who are carrying that deposit of salvation with the tender care of a mother nursing her child, take heed, I beseech you ; be wary in choosing the asylum to which you intrust it. Beware of human idols, shun the gods of flesh or of wood, who, far from protecting others, cannot protect themselves.

I behold you all, towards the close of the middle ages, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, emulously building up and aggrandizing that sanctuary of refuge, the Altar of Royalty. In order to dethrone idols, you erect an idol—and you offer to her everything,—gold, incense, and myrrh. To her, heavenly wisdom ; to her, tolerance, liberty, philosophy ; to her, the *ultima ratio* of society—Right.

How should this divinity not become colossal ? The most powerful minds in the world, pursued and hunted to death by the old implacable principle, work hard to build up their asylum ever higher and higher ; they would like to raise it to heaven. Hence, a series of legends, fables, adorned and amplified by every effort of genius : in the thirteenth century, it is the *saint-king*, more priest than the priest himself ; the *chevalier-king* in the sixteenth ; the *good-king* in Henri IV., and the God-king in Louis XIV.



## SECOND PART.

## ON THE ANCIENT MONARCHY.



## SECTION I.

As early as the year 1300, I behold the great Ghibelin poet, who, in opposition to the pope, strengthens and exalts to heaven the Colossus of Cæsar. *Unity* is salvation; *one* monarch, one for the whole earth. Then, blindly following up his austere, inflexible logic, he lays it down, that the greater this monarch, the more he becomes omnipotent,—the more he becomes a God, and the less mankind should apprehend that he will ever abuse his power. If he has all, he desires nought; still less can he envy or hate. He is perfect, and perfectly, sovereignly just; he governs infallibly, like the justice of God.

Such is the ground-work of all the theories which have since been heaped up in support of this principle: *Unity*, and the supposed result of unity, *peace*. And since then we have hardly ever had anything but wars.

We must dig lower than Dante, and discover and look into the earth for the deep popular foundation whereon the Colossus was built.

Man needs justice. A captive within the straight limits of a dogma reposing entirely on the arbitrary grace of God, he thought to save justice in a political religion, and made unto himself, of a man, a *God of Justice*, hoping that this visible God would preserve for him the light of equity which had been darkened in the other.

I hear this exclamation escape from the bosom of ancient France,—a tender expression of intense love: “O my king!”

This is no flattery. Louis XIV., when young, was truly loved by two persons,—by the people and La Vallière.

At that time, it was the faith of all. Even the priest seems to remove his God from the altar, to make room for the new God. The Jesuits banish Jesus from the door of their establishment to substitute Louis-le-Grand ; I read on the vaults of the chapel at Versailles : “ Intrabit templum suum dominator.” The words had not two meanings : the court knew but one God.

The Bishop of Meaux, is afraid lest Louis XIV. should not have enough faith in himself ; he encourages him : “ O kings, exercise your power boldly, for it is divine—Ye are gods ! ”

An astounding dogma, and yet the people were most willing to believe it. They suffered so many local tyrannies, that, from the most remote quarters, they invoked the distant God, the God of the monarchy. No evil is imputed to him : if his people suffer any, it is because he is too high or too distant.—“ If the king did but know ! ”

We have here a singular feature of France ; this nation for a long time comprehended politics only as devotion and love. A vigorous, obstinate, blind love, which attributes as a merit to their God all his imperfections ; whatever human weakness they perceive in him is a cause of thanksgiving rather than of disgust. They believe he will be but so much the nearer to them, less haughty, less hardhearted, and more compassionate on that account. They feel obliged to Henri IV. for his love of Gabrielle.

This love for royalty during the earlier days of Louis XIV. and Colbert, was idolatry ; the king’s endeavours to do equal justice to all, to lessen the odious inequality of taxation, gained him the heart of the people. Colbert reduced forty thousand pretended nobles, and subjected them to taxation ; he forced the leading burgesses to give an account at length of the finances of the towns, which they used to turn to their own advantage. The nobles of the provinces who, under favour of the confusion, made themselves feudal barons, received the formidable visits of the envoys of the parliament ; royal justice was blessed for its severity. The king appeared as terrible, in his *Grands jours*,\* as the Day of Judgment, between the people and the nobility, the people being on his

\* High days, on which was held a high Court of Justice.—C. C.

right, and huddling together by the side of their judge, full of love and confidence.

“Tremble, tyrants ! Do you not see that we have God on our side ?” This is exactly the language of a poor simple people, who believe they have the king in their favour. They imagine they already behold in him the Angel of the Revolution, and, with outstretched arms, they invoke him, full of tenderness and hope. Nothing is more affecting to read, among other facts of this kind, than the account of the *Grands jours d’Auvergne*, the ingenuous hope of the people, the quaking of the nobility. A peasant, whilst speaking to a lord, had not uncovered ; the noble knocked his hat off : “If you do not pick it up,” said the peasant, “the High Days are approaching, and the king will cut your head off.” The noble was afraid, and picked it up.\*

Grand, sublime position of royalty ! Would that she had never forsaken it ; would that the judge of all had not become the judge of *a few*, and that this God of Justice had not, like the God of the theologians, wished also to have his *elect* !

Such confidence, and such love ! and yet, all betrayed ! That well-beloved king was hardhearted towards his people. Search everywhere, in books and pictures, contemplate him in his portraits : not a motion, not one look, reveals the least emotion of the heart. The love of a whole people—that grand

\* The *gens du roi*, or, *parlementaires*, who inspired the people with so much confidence (and who, it is true, have done important services) did not, however, represent Justice more seriously than the priests represented Grace. This regal justice was, after all, subject to the king’s good pleasure. A great master of Machiavclism, Cardinal Duhois, explains, with much good sense and precision, in a memorial to the regent against the States-General (vol. i. of the *Moniteur*), the very simple mechanism of this parliamentary game, the steps of this minnet, the figures of this dance, up to the *lit de Justice* which ends the whole affair, by putting Justice under the feet of the king’s good pleasure. As to the States-General, which were a subject of dread to Dubois, Saint Simon, his adversary, recommends them as an expedient at once innocent, agreeable and easy, for dispensing one from paying one’s debts, for rendering bankruptcy honourable, *canonizing it*, to use his own expression ; moreover, those States are never seriously effective, says he very properly : *verba, voces*, nothing more. I say that there was, both in the States and in the parliaments, one thing most serious ; which is, that those vain images of liberty occupied, employed, the little vigour and spirit of resistance that subsisted. The reason why France could not have a constitution, is, that she believed she had one.

rarity, that true miracle—has succeeded only in making of their idol a miracle of egotism.

He took Adoration at its word, and believed himself a God. But he comprehended nothing in that word *God*. To be a God is to live for all ; but he becomes more and more the king of the court ; the few he sees, that band of gilded beggars who beset him, are his people. A strange Divinity, he contracted and stifled a world in one man, instead of extending and aggrandizing that man to the measure of a world. His whole world now is Versailles ; and even there, look narrowly ; if you find some petty, obscure, dismal closet, a living tomb, that is all he wants ; enough for one individual.\*

## SECTION II

### FAMINE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

I WILL presently investigate the idea on which France subsisted—the government of grace and paternal monarchy ; that inquiry will be much promoted perhaps, if I first establish, by authentic proofs, the results in which this system had at length terminated. A tree is known by its fruits.

First, nobody will deny that it secured for this people the glory of a prodigious and incredible patience. Read the foreign travellers of the last two centuries ; you behold them stupified, when travelling through our plains, at their wretched appearance, at the sadness, the solitude, the miserable poverty, the dismal, naked, empty cottages, and the starving, ragged population. There they learn what man is able to endure without dying ; what nobody, neither the English, the Dutch, nor the Germans, would have supported.

What astonishes them still more, is the resignation of this people, their respect for their masters, lay or ecclesiastical, and their idolatrous attachment for their kings. That they should preserve, amid such sufferings, so much patience and meekness, such goodness and docility, so little rancour for

\* I allude to the little dark apartment of Madame de Maintenon, where Louis XIV. expired. For his personal belief of his own divinity, see especially his surprising *Memoirs* written before his face and revised by himself

oppression, is indeed a strange mystery. It perhaps explains itself partly by the kind of careless philosophy, the too indifferent facility with which the Frenchman welcomes bad weather ; it will be fine again sooner or later ; rain to-day, sunshine to-morrow. He does not grumble at a rainy day.

French sobriety also, that eminently military quality, aided their resignation. Our soldiers, in this matter, as in every other, have shown the limits of human endurance. Their fasting, in painful marches and excessive toils, would have frightened the lazy hermits of the Thebais, such as Anthony and Pachomus.

We must learn from Marshal Villars how the armies of Louis XIV. used to live : “ Several times we thought that bread would absolutely fail us ; then, by great efforts, we got together enough for half a day : the next day is got over by fasting. When M. d’Artagnan marched, the brigades not marching were obliged to fast. Our sustenance is a miracle, and the virtue and firmness of our soldiers are marvellous. *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodiè*, say they to me as I pass through the ranks, after they have but the quarter and the half ration. I encourage them and give them promises ; they merely shrug up their shoulders, and gaze at me with a look of resignation that affects me. ‘ The Marshal is right,’ say they ; ‘ we must learn to suffer sometimes.’ ”

Patience ! Virtue ! Resignation ! Can any one help being affected, on meeting with such traces of the goodness of our fathers ?

Who will enable me to go through the history of their long sufferings, their gentleness and moderation ? It was long the astonishment, sometimes the laughing-stock of Europe ! Great merriment was it for the English to see those soldiers half-starved and almost naked, yet cheerful, amiable, and good towards their officers ; performing, without a murmur, immense marches, and, if they found nothing in the evening, making their supper of songs.

If patience merits heaven, this people, in the two last centuries, truly surpassed all the merits of the saints ; but how shall we make the legend ? Their vestiges are widely diffused. Misery is a general fact ; the virtue to support it a virtue so common among us, that historians seldom deign to

notice it. Moreover, history is defective in the eighteenth century ; France, after the cruel fatigues of the wars of Louis XIV., suffers too much to relate her own story. No more memoirs ; nobody has the courage to write his individual life ; even vanity is mute, having but shame to tell. Till the philosophical movement, this country is silent,—like the deserted palace of Louis XIV.—surviving his own family, like the chamber of the dying man who still governs, the old Cardinal Fleury.

It is difficult to describe properly the history of those times, as they are unmarked by rebellions. No people ever had fewer. This nation loved her masters ; she had no rebellion,—nothing but a Revolution.

It is from their very masters, their kings, princes, ministers, prelates, magistrates, and intendants, that we may learn to what extremities the people were reduced. It is they who are about to describe the restraints in which the people were held.

The mournful procession in which they all advance one after the other in order to recount the death of France, is led by Colbert in 1681 : “ One can go on no longer,” says he, and he dies.—They do go on however, for they expel half a million of industrious men about 1685, and kill still more, in a thirty years’ war. But, good God ! how many more die of misery !

As early as 1698, the result is visible. The intendants themselves, who create the evil, reveal and deplore it. In the memorials which they are asked to give for the young duke of Burgundy, they declare that such a province has lost the quarter of its inhabitants, another a third, and another the half. And the population is not renewed ; the peasant is so miserable that his children are all weak, sickly, and unable to live.

Let us follow attentively the series of years. That deplorable period of 1698 becomes an object of regret. “ Then,” says Boisguillebert, a magistrate, “ there was still oil in the lamp. To-day (1707) it goes out for want of nourishment.”—A mournful expression ; and he adds a threatening sentence ; one would think it was the year ’89 : “ The trial will now be between those who pay, and those whose only function is to receive.”

The preceptor to the grandson of Louis XIV., the Archbishop



of Cambrai, is not less *revolutionnaire* than this petty Norman magistrate : “ The people no longer live like men ; it is no longer safe to rely upon their patience. The old machine will break up at the first shock. We dare not look upon the state of exhaustion which we have now attained ; all we can do is to shut our eyes, open our hands, and go on taking.”

Louis XIV. dies at last, and the people thank God. Happily we have the regent, that good duke of Orleans, who, if Fenelon still lived, would take him for his counsellor ; he prints *Telemachus* ; France shall be a Salentum. No more wars. We are now the friends of England ; we give up to her our commerce, our honour, nay even our State secrets. Who would believe that, in the bosom of peace, this amiable prince, in only seven years, finds means to add to the two billions and a half of debts left by Louis XIV., *seven hundred and fifty millions* (of francs) more ?—The whole paid up in paper.

“ If I were a subject,” he used to say, “ I would most certainly revolt ! ” And when he was told that a disturbance was about to take place, “ The people are right,” said he ; “ they are good-natured fools to suffer so long ! ”

Fleury is as economical as the regent was lavish. Does France improve ? I doubt it, when I see that the bread presented to Louis XV. as the bread that the people ate, is bread made of fern.

The Bishop of Chartres told him, that, in his diocese, the men browsed with the sheep. What is perhaps still stronger, is, that M. d’Argenson (a minister) speaking of the sufferings of those times, contrasts them with *the good time*. Guess which. That of the regent and the duke,—the time when France, exhausted by Louis XIV., and bleeding at every pore, sought a remedy in a bankruptcy of three billions !

Everybody sees the crisis approaching. Fenelon says, so early as 1709 : “ The old machine will break up at the first shock.” It does not break up yet. Then Madame de Chateauroux, about 1742 : “ I see plainly that there will be a general overthrow, if no remedy be used.”—Yes, Madam, everybody sees it,—the king and your successor, Madame de Pompadour, as well as the economists, the philosophers, foreigners, everybody. All admire the longanimity of this people ; it is Job sitting among the nations. O meekness !

O patience!—Walpole laughs at it, but I mourn over it. That unfortunate people still loves; still believes; is obstinate in hoping. It is ever waiting for its saviour. Which? Its God-man, its king.

Ridiculous yet affecting idolatry—What will this God, this king, do? He possesses neither the firm will, nor the power, perhaps, to cure the deeply-rooted, inveterate, universal evil now consuming, parching, famishing the community, draining its life's blood from its veins,—from its very heart.

✓ The evil consists in this, that the nation, from the highest to the lowest, is organised so as to go on producing less and less, and paying more and more. She will go on declining, wasting away, giving, after her blood, her marrow; and there will be no end to it, till having reached the last gasp, and just expiring, the convulsion of the death-struggle arouses her once more, and raises that pale feeble body on its legs—Feeble?—grown strong perhaps by fury! *less and less*

Let us minutely examine, if you will, these words *producing less and less*. They are exact to the letter.

As early as under Louis XIV. the excise (*aides*) already weighed so heavily, that at Mantes, Etampes, and elsewhere, all the vines were plucked up.

The peasant having no goods to seize, the exchequer can lay hold of nothing but the cattle; it is gradually exterminated. No more manure. The cultivation of corn, though extended in the seventeenth century, by immense clearings of waste land, decreases in the eighteenth. The earth can no longer repair her generative strength; she fasts, and becomes exhausted; as the cattle may become extinct, so also the land now appears dead.

Not only does the land produce less, but it is less cultivated. In many places, it is not worth while to cultivate it. Large proprietors, tired of advancing to their peasants sums that never return, neglect the land which would require expensive improvements. The portion cultivated grows less, and the desert expands. People talk of agriculture, write books on it, make expensive experiments, paradoxical schemes of cultivation;—and agriculture, devoid of succour, of cattle, grows wild. Men, women, and children, yoke themselves to the plough. They would dig the ground with their nails, if our ancient laws



did not, at least, defend the ploughshare,—the last poor implement that furrows the earth. How can we be surprised that the crops should fail with such half-starved husbandmen, or that the land should suffer and refuse to yield? The yearly produce no longer suffices for the year. As we approach 1789, Nature yields less and less. Like a beast over fatigued, unwilling to move one step further, and preferring to lie down and die, she waits, and produces no more. Liberty is not only the life of man, but also that of nature.

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### SECTION III.

DOES ANCIENT PATRONAGE SUBSIST IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY?

NEVER accuse Nature of being a bad mother. Believe not that God has withdrawn the beneficent light of his countenance from the earth. The earth is always a good and bountiful mother, ever ready and willing to help mankind; though superficially she may appear sterile and ungrateful, yet she loves him tenderly in her innermost depths.

It is man who has ceased to love,—man who is the enemy of mankind. The malediction which weighs him down is his own, the curse of egotism and injustice, the load of an unjust society. Whom must he blame? Neither nature, nor God, but himself, his work, his idols, his gods, whom he has created.

He has transferred his idolatry from one to another. To his wooden gods he has said, “Protect me, be my saviours!” He has said so to the priest, he has said so to the noble, he has said so to the king.—Alas! poor man, be thy own saviour,—save thyself.

He loved them,—that is his excuse; it explains his blindness. How he loved, how he believed! What artless faith in the *good Lord*, in the *dear, holy man of God*! How he would fall on his knees before them on the public road, and kiss the dust long after they had passed! How obstinately he put his trust and his hopes in them, even when spurned and trampled on! Remaining ever a minor,—an infant, he felt a sort of filial delight in concealing nothing from them, in intrusting to their hands the whole care of his future. “I have

nothing : I am poor ; but I am the baron's man, and belong to that fine *château* yonder !" Or else, "I have the honour to be the serf of that famous monastery. I can never want for anything."

Go now, go, good man, in the day of thy need ; go and knock at their gate.

At the *château* ? But the gate is shut ; the large table, where so many once sat down, has long been empty ; the hearth is cold ; there is no fire, no smoke. The lord is at Versailles. He does not, however, forget thee. He has left his attorney behind, and his bailiff, to take care of thee.

"Well ! I will go to the monastery. Is not that house of charity the poor man's home ? The Church says to me every day : 'God so loved the world !—He was made man, and became food to nourish man !' Either the Church is nothing, or it must be charity divine realised upon earth."

Knock, knock, poor Lazarus ! Thou wilt wait long enough. Dost thou not know that the Church has now withdrawn from the world, and that all these affairs of poor people and charity no longer concern her ? There were two things in the middle ages,—wealth and functions, of which she was very jealous ; more equitable, however, in modern times, she has made two divisions of them ; the functions, such as schools, hospitals, alms, and the patronage of the poor,—all these things which mixed her up too much with worldly cares, she has generously handed over to the laity.

Her other duties absorb all her attention,—those principally which consist in defending till death the pious foundations of which she is the trustee, in allowing no diminution of them, and in transmitting them with increased wealth to future generations. In these respects she is truly heroic, ready for martyrdom, if necessary. In 1788, the State, weighed down with debt, and driven to its last extremity, at a loss to devise new schemes for draining a ruined people, applies as a suppliant to the clergy, and entreats them to pay their taxes. Their answer is admirable, and should never be forgotten : "No, the *people* of France is not taxable at pleasure."

What ! invoke the name of the people as a ground to excuse themselves from succouring the people ? That was the utmost, truly the sublimest pitch, which Pharisean wisdom could ever

hope to attain. Come at length to the ever-memorable year of '89. The clergy is after all but mortal. It must share the common lot. But it can *enjoy the thought*, so consoling in our last moments, to have been consistent till death.

The mystery of Christianity, a God giving himself to man—a God descending into man,—that doctrine, harsh to reason, could be imposed on the heart only by the visible continuation of the miracle,—alms ever flowing without a capability of exhaustion, and spiritual alms deriving a never-failing support from a similar doctrine ; in this you might see some evidence of a God ever present in his Church. But the Church of the eighteenth century, sterile, and no longer giving anything, either material or intellectual, demonstrates precisely the very contrary of what religion teaches, (Oh, impiety !) I mean, “The absence of God in man.”

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## SECTION IV.

### ROYAL POPULARITY.

IN the eighteenth century, the people no longer hoped for anything from that patronage which supported them at other times,—the clergy and the nobility. These will do nothing for them. But they still believe in the king ; they transfer to the infant Louis XV. both their faith and their necessity of loving. He, the only remains of so great a family, saved like the infant Joas, is preserved apparently that he may himself save others. They weep on beholding that child ! How many evil years have to run their course ! But they wait with patience, and still hope ; that minority, that long tuition of twenty or thirty years, must have an end.

It was night when the news reached Paris, that Louis XV., on his way to the army, had been seized with illness at Metz. “The people leaped from their beds, rushed out in a tumult, without knowing whither. The churches were thrown open in the middle of the night. Men assembled in the cross-roads, accosted, and asked questions, without knowing one another. In several churches, the priest who pronounced the prayer for recovery of the king, interrupted the chanting with his sobs, and the people responded by their cries and tears. The

courier who brought the news of his recovery, was hugged, and almost stifled; they kissed his horse, and led him in triumph. Every street re-echoed the same joyful cry: '*Le Roi est guéri!*'"

This, in 1744. Louis XV. is named the *Well-beloved*. Ten years pass. The same people believe that the well-beloved takes baths of human blood; that, in order to renew his exhausted frame, he bathes himself in children's blood. One day, when the police, according to their atrocious custom, were carrying off men, children wandering in the streets, and little girls (especially such as were pretty), the mothers screamed, the people flocked together, and a riot broke out. From that moment, the king never resided in Paris. He seldom passed through it, except to go from Versailles to Compiègne. He had a road made in great haste, which avoided Paris, and enabled the king to escape the observation of his people. That road is still called *Le Chemin de la Révolte*.

These ten years (1744—1754) are the very crisis of the century. The king, that God, that idol, becomes an object of horror. The dogma of the regal incarnation perishes irrecoverably. And in its place arises the sovereignty of the mind. Montesquieu, Buffon, and Voltaire, in that short interval publish their grand works; Rousseau was just beginning his.

Unity till then had reposed on the idea of an incarnation, either religious or political. A human God was an essential requisite—a God of flesh, for the purpose of uniting either the church or the state. Humanity, still feeble, placed its unity in a sign, a visible living sign, a man, an individual. Henceforth, unity, more pure, and free from this material condition, will consist in the union of hearts, the community of the mind, the profound union of sentiments and ideas arising from identity of opinions.

The great doctors of the new church, mentioned before, though dissenting in secondary matters, are admirably agreed on two essential points, which constitute the genius of the age in which they lived, as well as that of future times.

1st. Their mind is free from all forms of incarnation; disentangled from that corporeal vesture which had so long invested it.

2dly. The mind, in their opinion, is not only intelligence, it

is warmth, love, an ardent love for mankind : love in itself, and not subject to certain dogmata, or conditions of religious policy. The *charity* of the middle ages, a slave to Theology, but too easily followed her imperious mistress ; too docile, indeed, and so conciliating as to admit whatever could be tolerated by hate. What is the value of a charity which could enact the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, fire the faggots at the stake, and organise the Inquisition ?

Whilst endeavouring to divest religion of its carnal character, and to reject the doctrine of a religious incarnation, this century, at first timid in its audacity, remained for a long time carnal in its politics, and seemed anxious to respect the doctrine of a regal incarnation,—and through the king, that God-man, to achieve the happiness of mankind. It is the chimera of the philosophers and economists, of such men, I mean, as Voltaire and Turgot, to accomplish the revolution by the king.

Nothing is more curious than to behold this idol disputed as it were by both parties. The philosophers pull him to the right, the priests to the left. Who will carry him off ? Women. This god is a god of flesh.

The woman who secures him for twenty years, Madame de Pompadour (whose maiden name was Poisson) would like, at first, to make an ally for herself of the public, against the court. The philosophers are summoned. Voltaire writes the king's history, and poems and dramas for the king ; d'Argenson is made minister ; and the comptroller-general, Machault, demands a statement of ecclesiastical property. That blow awakens the clergy. The Jesuits do not waste time in arguing the point with a woman ; they bring another woman to oppose her, and they triumph. But what woman ? The king's own daughter. Here we want Suetonius. Such things had never been since the days of the twelve Cæsars.

Voltaire was dismissed ; and so was d'Argenson, and Machault later. Madame de Pompadour humbled herself, took the Communion, and put herself at the feet of the queen. Meanwhile, she was preparing an infamous and pitiful machine, whereby she regained and kept possession of the king till his death : a seraglio, recruited by children whom they bought.

And there slowly expired Louis XV. The god of flesh abdicated every vestige of mind.

Avoiding Paris, shunning his people, ever shut up at Versailles, he finds even there too many people, too much daylight. He wants a shadowy retreat, the wood, the chace, the secret lodge of Trianon, or his convent of the Parc-aux-cerfs.

How strange and inexplicable that those *amours*, at least those shadows, those images of love, cannot soften his heart. He purchases the daughters of the people; by them he lives with the people; he receives their childish caresses, and assumes their language. Yet he remains the enemy of the people; hard-hearted, selfish, and unfeeling; he transforms the king into a dealer in corn, a speculator in famine.

In that soul, so dead to sentiment, one thing still remained alive: the fear of dying. He was ever speaking of death, of funerals, and of the grave. He would often forebode the death of the monarchy; but provided it lasted his time, he desired no more.

In a year of scarcity (they were not uncommon then), he was hunting, as usual, in the forest of Sénart. He met a peasant carrying a bier, and inquired "whither he was conveying it?—To such a place.—For a man or woman?—A man.—What did he die of?—Hunger."

## SECTION V.

### NO HOPE BUT JUSTICE.

THAT dead man is Ancient France, and that bier, the coffin of the Ancient Monarchy. Therein let us bury, and for ever, the dreams in which we once fondly trusted,—paternal royalty, the government of grace, the clemency of the monarch, and the charity of the priest; filial confidence, implicit belief in the gods here below.

That fiction of the old world,—that deceitful legend, which was ever on its tongue,—was to substitute *love in the place of law*.

If that world, almost annihilated under the title of love, wounded by charity, and heart-broken by grace, can revive, it will revive by the means of law, justice, and equity.

O blasphemy! They had opposed grace to law, love to justice. As if unjust grace could still be grace: as if those



things which our weakness divides, were not two aspects of the same truth,—the right and the left-hand of God.

They have made justice a negative thing, which forbids, prohibits, excludes,—an obstacle to impede, and a knife to slaughter. They do not know that justice is the eye of Providence. Love, blind among us, clear-sighted in God, sees by justice—a vital-absorbing glance. A prolific power is in the justice of God; whenever it touches the earth, the latter is blest, and brings forth. The sun and the dew are not enough, it must have Justice. Let her but appear, and the harvests come. Harvests of men and nations will spring up, put forth, and flourish in the sunshine of equity.

A day of justice, one single day, which is called the Revolution, produced ten millions of men.

But how far off? Did it appear, in the middle of the eighteenth century, remote and impossible? Of what materials shall I compose it? all is perishing around me. To build, I should want stones, lime, and cement; and I am empty-handed. The two saviours of this people—the priest and the king—have destroyed them, beyond the possibility of restoration. Feudal life and municipal life are no more,—both swallowed up in royalty. Religious life became extinct with the clergy. Alas! not even a local legend or national tradition remains:—no more of those happy prejudices which constitute the life of an infant people. They have destroyed everything, even popular delusions. Behold them now stripped and empty,—*tabula rasa*; the future must write as best it may.

O, pure spirit, last inhabitant of that destroyed world; universal heir of all those extinct powers, how wilt thou guide us to the only bestower of life? How wilt thou restore to us Justice and the idea of Right?

Here, thou beholdest nothing but stumbling-blocks, old ruins, that one must pull down, crumble to powder, and neglect. Nothing is standing, nothing living. Do what thou wilt, thou wilt have at least the consolation of having destroyed only that which was already dead.

The working of the pure spirit is even that of God—the art of God is its art. Its construction is too profoundly harmonious within, to appear so without. Seek not here the straight lines and the angles, the stiff regularity of your buildings of

stone and marble. In a living organisation, harmony of a far superior strength is ever deeply seated within.

First, let this new world have material life ; let us give it for a beginning, for a first foundation,—the colossal *Histoire Naturelle* :\* let us put order in Nature ; for her order is justice.

But order is as yet impossible. From the bosom of Nature, —glowing, boiling, as when Etna awakes,—flames forth an immense volcano.† Every science and every art bursts forth. The eruption over, a mass remains,—an enormous mass mingled with dross and gold : the *Encyclopédie*.

Behold two ages of the young world,—two days of the creation. Order is wanting, and so is Unity. Let us make man, the unity of the world, and with him let Order come, and with her, the Divinity whose advent we expect, the long-desired majesty of Divine Justice.

Man appears under three figures : Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, three interpreters of the Just and Right.

Let us note law ; let us seek law ; perhaps we may yet find it in some corner of the globe. There may perhaps be some clime favourable for justice,—some better land which naturally yields the fruit of equity. The traveller, the inquirer, who pursues it through the earth, is the calm, majestic Montesquieu. But justice flies before him ; it remains relative and moveable ; law, in his estimation, is a relation,—merely abstract, and inanimate ; it is not endowed with vitality.‡

Montesquieu may be resigned to this result ; but not so Voltaire. Voltaire is the one who suffers, who has taken upon him all the agony of mankind, who feels and hunts out every iniquity. All the ills that fanaticism and tyranny have ever inflicted upon the world, have been inflicted upon Voltaire. It was he, the martyr, the universal victim, whom they slaughtered in their Saint Bartholomew, whom they buried in the mines of the new

\* Buffon ; the first volume, 1748. See the edition of MM. Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire.

† Diderot, who published the two first volumes of the *Encyclopédie* in 1751. M. Génin has just written an article on him, which everybody will find witty, brilliant, full of amusement, charming. I find it penetrating ; it goes to the very marrow of the subject.

‡ Montesquieu's *Esprit des Loix* appeared in 1748. I shall frequently have occasion to explain how very little that great genius possessed the perception of Right. He is, unwittingly, the founder of our absurd English school.



world, whom they burned at Seville, whom the parliament of Toulouse broke on the wheel with Calas.—He weeps, he laughs, in his agony,—a terrible laugh, at which the bastilles of tyrants and the temples of the Pharisees fall to the ground.\*

And down fell at the same time all those petty barriers within which every church intrenched itself, calling itself universal, and wishing to destroy all others. They fall before Voltaire, to make room for the *human* church, for that catholic church which will receive and contain them all in justice and in peace.

Voltaire is the witness of Right,—its apostle and its martyr. He has settled the old question put from the origin of the world: Is there religion without justice, without humanity?

## SECTION VI.

### THE THREE MASTER MINDS.

MONTESQUIEU is the writer, the interpreter of Right; Voltaire weeps and clamours for it; and Rousseau founds it.

It was a grand moment, which found Voltaire overwhelmed by a new calamity, the disaster of Lisbon; when, blinded by tears, and doubting Heaven, Rousseau comforted him, restored God to him, and upon the ruins of the world proclaimed the existence of Providence.

Far more than Lisbon, it is the world which is tumbling to pieces. Religion and the State, morals and laws, everything is perishing.—And where is the family? Where is love?—even the child—the future? Oh! what must we think of a world wherein even maternal love is perishing?

And is it thou, poor, ignorant, lonely, abandoned workman, hated by the philosophers and detested by the clergy, sick in the depth of winter, dying upon the snow, in thy unprotected pavilion of Montmorenci, who art willing to resist alone, and to write (though the ink freezes in thy pen) to protest against death!

\* Read, on Voltaire, four pages, stamped with the seal of genius, which no man of mere talent could ever have written.—Quinet, Ultramontanism.—(See my translation of this book, *Roman Church and Modern Society*, pp. 117, 118, 119, 120. Chapman: London 1845, C.C.)

Is it indeed with thy spinet and thy "Village Curate," poor musician, that thou art going to re-construct a world? Thou hadst a slender voice, some energy and warmth of language on thy arrival at Paris, rich in thy Pergolèse, in music, and in hope. It is long since then; soon thou wilt have lived half a century; thou art old; all is over. Why dost thou speak of regeneration to that dying society, when thou thyself art no more?

Yes, it was truly difficult, even for a man less cruelly treated by fate, to extricate his feet from the quicksand, from that deep mire where everything was swallowed up.

What was the resting-point whereon that strong man, finding a footing, stopped, held fast—and everything stood firm?

What footing did he find? O feeble world, O ye of little faith, degenerate sons, forgetful of Rousseau and the Revolution?

He found it in what has grown too faint among you—in his heart. In the depths of his suffering he read, and read distinctly, what the middle ages were never able to read: *A Just God*. And what was said by a glorious child of Rousseau? "*Right is the sovereign of the world.*"

That splendid motto was uttered only at the end of the century; it is its revelation,—its profound and sublime formula.

Rousseau spoke by the mouth of another, by Mirabeau; yet it is no less the soul of Rousseau's genius. When once he severed himself from the false science of the time, and from a no less false society, you behold in his writings the dawn of a celestial effulgence,—Duty, Right!

Its sweet and prolific power shines forth in all its brilliancy in the profession of faith of the Vicar of Savoy. God himself subject to Justice, subject to Right!—Let us say rather that God and Right are identical.

If Rousseau had spoken in the terms of Mirabeau, his language would not have taken effect. Necessities change with the times.—To a world ready to act, on the very day of action, Mirabeau said: "Right is the sovereign of the world," you are the subjects of Right.—To a world still slumbering, inert, feeble, and devoid of energy, Rousseau said, and said well: "The general will is right and reason." Your will is Right. Then arouse yourselves, ye slaves!

“Your collective will is Reason herself.” In other words, Ye are Gods !

And who, indeed, without believing himself God, could ever do anything great ? Then it is that you may fearlessly cross the bridge of Arcola ; then it is, that, in the name of duty, you sever yourself from your dearest affections, your heart.

Let us be God ! The impossible becomes possible and easy. Then, to overthrow a world is a mere trifle ; why, one creates a world.

This it is which explains how a feeble breath from a manly breast, a simple melody arising from the heart of the poor musician, raised the dead.

France is moved in her inmost soul. All Europe is changed by it. The vast massy German empire rocks on her old foundations. They criticise, but obey. “ Mere sentimentality,” say they, with an attempt to smile. And yet these dreamers follow it. The very philosophers, the abstractors of quintessence, take, in spite of themselves, the simple path of the poor Vicar of Savoy.

What, then, has happened ? What divine light has shone, to produce so great a change ? Is it the power of an idea, of a new inspiration, of a revelation from above ? Yes, there has been a revelation. But the novelty of the doctrine is not what affects us most. We have here a more strange, a more mysterious phenomenon,—an influence felt even by those who do not read, and could never comprehend. Nobody knows why, but since that glowing language impregnated the air, the temperature has changed ; it seems as though a breath of life had been wafted over the world ; the earth begins to bear fruits that she would never else have borne.

What is it ? Shall I tell you ? It is what vivifies and melts the heart ; it is the breath of youth ; and that is why we all yield to its influence. In vain would you prove to us that this language is weak, or overstrained, or of vulgar sentiment. Such is youth and such is passion. Such have we been, and, if we occasionally recognise therein the foibles of our early youth, we do but feel more vividly the sweet yet bitter charms of the time that will return no more.

Warmth and thrilling melody, such is the magic of Rousseau. His power, as it is in his “ *Emile*” and the “ *Contrat Social*,”

may be discussed and combated. But, by his "Confessions" and his "Reveries," by his weakness, he has vanquished us, and drawn tears from every eye.

Foreign, hostile geniuses were able to reject the light, but they have all felt the influence of the warmth. They did not listen to the words ; but the music subdued them. The gods of profound harmony, the rivals of the storm, which thundered from the Rhine to the Alps, themselves felt the all-powerful incantation of that sweet melody, that soft human voice,—the little morning ditty, sung for the first time beneath the vine at Charmettes.

That youthful affecting voice, that melody of the heart, is heard long after that tender heart has been buried in the earth. The "Confessions," which appeared after the death of Rousseau, seem a sigh from the tomb. He returns—rises from the dead, more potent, more admired, more adored than ever.

That miracle he shares in common with his rival, Voltaire. His rival?—No. Enemy?—No. Let them be for ever upon the same pedestal, those two Apostles of Humanity.\*

Voltaire, nearly octogenarian, buried among the snows of the Alps, broken down by age and labour, nevertheless rises also from the dead. The grand thought of the century, inaugurated by him, is also to be closed by him ; he who was the first to open, is also to resume and finish the chorus. Glorious century ! Well does it deserve to be called for ever the heroic age of the mind. An old man on the verge of the grave ; he has seen the others, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Buffon pass away ; he has witnessed the extraordinary success of Rousseau,—three books in three years. "And the earth was silent." Voltaire is not discouraged ; behold him entering, lively and young, upon a new career. Where, then, is the old Voltaire ? He was dead. But a voice has roused him all alive from the tomb, that voice which had ever given him life,—the voice of Humanity.

\* A noble and tender idea of Madame Sand, which shows how genius rises superior to those vain oppositions which the *esprit de système* creates for itself between those great witnesses, of truth not opposed, but harmonising. When it was lately proposed to raise statues to Voltaire and Rousseau, Madame Sand, in an admirable letter, requested that the two reconciled geniuses might be placed upon the same pedestal. Noble thoughts come from the heart.

Ancient champion, to thee the crown ! Here thou art again, conqueror of conquerors. Throughout a century, in every kind of warfare, with every weapon and doctrine, opposite, contrary, no matter what, thou hast pursued, without ever deviating, one interest, one cause—holy Humanity. And yet they have called thee a sceptic ! And they have termed thee changeable ! They thought to surprise thee in the seeming contradictions of a flexible language ever serving the selfsame thought !

Thy faith shall be crowned by the very work of faith. Others have spoken of Justice, but thou shalt perform it ; thy words are acts, realities. Thou defendest Calas and La Barre, thou savest Sirven, and dost annihilate the scaffold of the Protestants. Thou hast conquered for religious liberty, and moreover, for civil freedom, as advocate of the last serfs, for the reform of our barbarous legislation and criminal laws, which themselves were crimes.

Behold in all this the dawn of the Revolution. Thou dost make it, and see it. Look for thy reward, look, behold it yonder ! Now thou mayest die ; thy firm faith deserved that thou shouldst not take thy flight before thou hadst seen the holy land.

## SECTION VII.

### THE REVOLUTION COMMENCES.

WHEN those two men have passed, the Revolution is accomplished in the intellectual world.

Now it becomes the duty of their sons, legitimate and illegitimate, to expound and diffuse it in a hundred ways : some in eloquence and fiery satire, others will strike bronze medals to transmit it from hand to hand ; Mirabeau, Beaumarchais, Raynal, Mably, and Sieyès, are now to do their work.

The Revolution is on her march, with Rousseau and Voltaire still in front. Kings themselves are in her train ; Frederick, Catherine, Joseph, Leopold—that is the court of the two chieftains of the age. Reign, great men, ye true sovereigns of the world ; reign, O my kings !

All appear converted, all wish for the Revolution ; though every one, it is true, wishes it, not for himself, but for others

The nobility would willingly make it against the clergy, and the clergy against the nobility.

Turgot is the touchstone for all : he summons them to say whether they wish truly to amend ; they all unanimously answer : No, let what ought to be done, be done !

Meanwhile, I see the Revolution everywhere, even in Versailles. All admit it to a certain limit, where it will not hurt them : Louis XVI. as far as the plans of Fenelon and the Duke of Burgundy, and the Count d'Artois as far as Figaro ; he forces the king to allow the trying drama to be played. The queen wishes for the Revolution, at least in her palace, for the *parvenus* ; that queen, devoid of prejudices, turns all her grand ladies out of doors, in order to keep her beautiful friend Madame de Polignac.

Necker, the *borrower*, himself discredits his loans by publishing the misery of the monarchy. A *revolutionnaire* by publicity, he believes he is so by his little provincial assemblies, wherein the privileged are to say what must be taken from the privileged.

The witty Calonne comes next, and being unable to glut the privileged even by breaking into the public treasury, he takes his course, accuses them, and hands them over to the hatred of the people.

He has accomplished the Revolution against the notables ; Lomenie, a philosophical priest, accomplishes it against the parliaments.

Calonne said admirably, when he avowed the *deficit*, and pointed to the yawning gulf : “ What remains to fill it with ? *The abuses.* ”

That seemed clear to everybody ; the only thing obscure was whether Calonne did not speak in the name of *the very Prince of abuses*, of him who sustained all others, and was the keystone of the whole wretched edifice ? In two words, was Royalty the support or the remedy of those abuses denounced by the King's own creature.

That the clergy was an abuse, and the nobility an abuse, seemed but too evident.

The privilege of the clergy, founded on teaching, and the example they formerly set the people, had become nonsense ; nobody possessed the faith less. In their last assembly, they



strive hard to get the philosophers punished, and, to make the demand, they are represented by an atheist and a sceptic : Loménie and Talleyrand.

The privilege of the nobility had likewise become nonsense : formerly they paid nothing because they paid with their sword ; they furnished the *ban* and *arrière-ban* ; a vast undisciplined multitude, called together for the last time in 1674. They continued to furnish the army with officers, by shutting out all others from the career, and rendering the formation of a real army impossible. The civil army, the administration, the bureau-cracy, was invaded by the nobility ; the ecclesiastical army, in its higher ranks, was also filled with nobles. Those who made it their profession to live in grand style, that is to say, to do nothing, had undertaken to do all ; and everything remained undone.

Once more, the clergy and the nobility were a burden to the land, the malediction of the country, a gangrene which it was necessary to cut away ; that was as clear as daylight to everybody.

The only obscure question was that of Royalty ; a question, not of mere form, as people have so often repeated, but a fundamental, intimate question, more vital than any other in France ; a question not only of politics, but of love and religion. No people ever loved their kings so dearly.

The eyes of men, open under Louis XV., shut again under Louis XVI., and the question remained once more in the dark. The hope of the people still clung to royalty ; Turgot hoped, Voltaire hoped, that poor young king, so ill born and bred, would have desired to do good. He struggled, and was dragged away. The prejudices of his birth and education, even his hereditary virtues, hurried him to his ruin—a sad historical problem ! Honest men have excused him, and honest men have condemned him. Duplicity, mental reservations, (but little surprising, no doubt, in a pupil of the Jesuit party,) such were his faults ; and lastly his crime, which led him to death, his appeal to foreigners. With all that, let us not forget that he had been sincerely anti-Austrian and anti-English ; that he had truly, fervently desired to improve our navy ; that he had founded Cherbourg at eighteen leagues from Portsmouth ; that he helped to cut England in two, and set one part of England against the other. That tear which Carnot shed



on signing his death-warrant, remains for him in history ; History, and even Justice, in judging him, will weep.

Every day brings on his punishment. This is not the time for me to relate these things. Let it suffice to say here that the best was the last—great lesson of Providence !—so that it might appear plain to all that the evil was less in the man than in the institution itself ; that it might be more than the condemnation of the king—the condemnation of ancient royalty. That religion is at an end. Louis XV. or Louis XVI., infamous or honest, the god is nevertheless still a man ; if he be not so by vice, he is by virtue, by easy good nature. Human and feeble, incapable of refusing, of resisting, every day sacrificing the people to the courtiers, and like the God of the priests, damning the many, and saving his *elect*.

As we have already said : The *religion of grace*, partial for the elect, and the *government of grace*, in the hands of favourites, are perfectly analogous. Privileged mendicity, whether it be filthy and monastic, or gilded, as at Versailles, is ever mendicity. Two paternal powers : ecclesiastical paternity, characterised by the Inquisition ; and monarchical paternity, by the Red Book and the Bastille.

## SECTION VIII.

### THE RED BOOK.

WHEN Queen Anne of Austria was regent, “ there remained,” says Cardinal Retz, “ but two little words in the language : ‘ The queen is so good ! ’ ”

From that day France declines in energy ; the elevation of the lower classes, which notwithstanding the harsh administration of Richelieu had been so remarkable, subsides and disappears. Wherefore ? Because the “ queen is good ; ” she loads with presents the brilliant crowd besetting her palace ; all the provincial nobility who fled under Richelieu return, demand, obtain, take, and pillage ; the least they expect is to be exempted from taxation. The peasant who has managed to purchase a few acres has the sole duty of payment ; he must bear all—he is obliged to sell again, and once more becomes a tenant, steward, or a poor domestic.

Louis XIV. is severe at first ; no exemption from taxes ; Colbert cancels 40,000 of them. The country thrives. But Louis XIV. grows good-natured ; he is more and more affected by the fate of the poor nobility ; everything is for them,—grades, places, pensions, even benefices, and Saint-Cyr for noble young ladies. The nobility flourishes, and France is at her last extremity.

Louis XVI. is also severe at first, grumbles, and even refuses ; the courtiers jest bitterly about his ineivility and rough answers (*coups de boutoir*). The reason is, he has a bad minister—that inflexible Turgot : and, alas ! the queen has no power yet. In 1778, the king at last yields ; the re-action of nature acts powerfully in favour of the queen ; he can no longer refuse anything, neither to her nor to her brother. The most amiable man in France becomes comptroller-general : M. de Calonne uses as much wit and grace to give, as his predecessors had used skill to elude and refuse. “Madam,” he would say to the queen, “if it be possible, it is done ; if impossible, it shall be done.” The queen purchases Saint Cloud ; the king, so parsimonious till then, allows himself to be seduced, and buys Rambouillet. Vaudreuil, the disinterested friend of the Count d’Artois, will receive nothing ; he sells to the crown, for a million, his estates in America, receives them back and keeps them. Who can say how many estates and what sums *Diane de Polignac*, by cleverly directing Jules de Polignac, managed to secure ? The crowned Rosina, having become in course of time Countess Almaviva, could refuse nothing to Suzanne,—to the versatile charms of her who was Suzanne or Chérubino.

The Revolution spoiled all. It roughly tore aside the graceful veil that masked the public ruin. The veil, being removed, revealed the vessel of the Danaïdes. The monstrous affair of the Puy Paulin and Fenestrangle, those millions squandered (between a famine and a bankruptcy), flung away by a silly woman into a woman’s lap, far surpassed anything that satire had exposed. People laughed,—with horror.

The inflexible reporter of the Committee of Finances acquainted the assembly with a mystery unknown to everybody : “In expenditure, the king is the *sole director*.”

The only standard of expenditure was the king’s good nature.

Too tender-hearted to refuse—to grieve those whom he saw about him—he found himself in reality dependent on them. At the slightest inclination towards economy, they were moody and sullen. He was obliged to yield. Several of them were still bolder; they spoke out, loud and resolutely, and took the king to task. M. de Coigny (the queen's first or second lover, according to dates), refused to submit to a retrenchment which they had proposed in one of his enormous pensions; a scene ensued, and he got into a passion with Louis XVI. The king shrugged up his shoulders, and made no answer. In the evening, he said: "Indeed, had he beaten me, I should have submitted to it."

No noble family in difficulties, no illustrious mother marrying her daughter and son, but draws money from the king. "Those great families contribute to the splendour of the monarchy and the glory of the throne," &c. &c. The king signs with a heavy heart, and copies into his Red Book: To Madam —, 500,000 francs. The lady carries the order to the minister: "I have no money, Madam." She insists, threatens; she may be troublesome, being in high favour with the queen. The minister ultimately finds the money. He will rather postpone, like Loménie, the payment of the small pensioners; let them starve, if they will; or else, as he did, he will take the charitable funds intended to repair the disasters of storms and fire; nay, even plunder the funds of the hospitals.

France is in good hands. Everything is going on well. So good-natured a king, such an amiable queen. The only difficulty is, that, independently of the privileged paupers at Versailles, there is another class, no less noble, and far more numerous, the provincial privileged paupers, who have nothing, receive nothing, say they; they rend the air with their exclamations. Those men, long before the people, will begin the Revolution.

By-the-bye, there is a people. Between these paupers and those paupers, who are all persons of fortune, we had forgotten the people.

The people! Oh! that is the business of the farmers of the revenue. Things are altered. Formerly, financiers were hard-hearted men. Now they are all philanthropists, kind, amiable, and magnificent; with one hand they starve, it is

true ; but often they nourish with the other. They reduce thousands to beggary, and give alms. They build hospitals, and fill them.

“Persepolis,” says Voltaire, in one of his stories, “has thirty kings of finance, who draw millions from the people and give a little to the king.” Out of the *gabelle*\*, for instance, which brought in one hundred and twenty millions, the *Ferme générale* kept back sixty, and deigned to leave some fifty or sixty for the king.

Tax-gathering was nothing but an organised warfare ; it caused an army of two hundred thousand drones to oppress the soil. Those locusts devoured,—wasted everything. To drain substance out of a people, thus devoured, it was necessary to have cruel laws, terrible penalties, the galleys, gibbets, racks. The farming agents were authorised to employ arms ; they murdered, and were afterwards judged by the special tribunals of the *Ferme générale*.

The most shocking part of the system was the easy good nature of the king and the farmers of the revenue. On one hand the king, on the other the thirty kings of the exchequer, gave away (or sold cheap) exemptions from taxation ; the king created nobles ; the farmers created for themselves fictitious *employés*, who, under that title, were exempt. Thus, the exchequer was working against itself ; whilst it was augmenting the sum to be paid, it diminished the number of the payers : the load weighing upon fewer shoulders, became more and more oppressive.

The two privileged orders paid whatever they pleased,—the clergy a gratuitous non-collectible tax ; the nobles contributed for certain imposts, but according to whatever they thought proper to declare, which the treasury-agents registered with a bow, without either examination or verification. The neighbours had to pay so much the more.

O, heaven ! O, earth ! O, justice ! If it were through conquest, or by a master’s tyranny, that the people were perishing, they could endure it. But they perish through good nature ! They would perhaps endure the hard-heartedness of a Richelieu ; but how can they endure the good nature of Loménie and

\* Duties on salt, &c., C.C.

Calonne, the tender-heartedness of the financiers, and the philanthropy of the farmers of the revenue !

Suffer and die : be it so ! But to suffer *by election*, to die through mere necessity—so that *grace* for one is death and ruin for the other ! Oh ! that is too much, too much by half.

Kind-hearted men, you who weep over the evils of the Revolution (doubtless with too much reason), shed also a few tears for the evils which occasioned it.

Come and see, I beseech you, this people lying in the dust, like poor Job, amid their false friends, their patrons, their influential protectors—the clergy and royalty. Behold the look of anguish that they turn upon their king, without speaking. What language is in that look !

“ O king, whom I made my god, to whom I erected an altar, and to whom I prayed even before God himself, from whom, in the jaws of death, I implored for salvation ; you, my only hope, you, whom I have adored. What ! have you then felt nothing ? ”

## SECTION IX.

### THE BASTILLE.

THE illustrious Quesnay, physician to Louis XV. and to Madame de Pompadour, who lived in the house of the latter at Versailles, saw the king one day rush in suddenly, and felt alarmed. Madame du Hausset, the witty *femme de chambre*, who has left such curious memoirs, inquired of him why he seemed so uneasy. “ Madam,” returned he, “ whenever I see the king, I say to myself : ‘ There is a man who can cut my head off.’ ” “ Oh ! ” said she “ the king is *too good* ! ”

The lady’s maid thus summed up, in one word, the guarantees of the monarchy.

The king was too good to cut a man’s head off ; that was no longer agreeable to custom. But he could, with one word, send him to the Bastille, and there *forget* him.

It remains to be decided which is best,—to perish by one blow, or to suffer a lingering death for thirty or forty years.

There were some twenty Bastilles in France, of which six only (in 1775) contained three hundred prisoners. At Paris,

in '79, there were about thirty prisons where people might be incarcerated without any sentence. An infinite number of convents were subsidiary to these Bastilles.

All these state-prisons, towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., were, like everything else, controlled by the Jesuits. They were, in their hands, instruments of torture for the Protestants and the Jansenists—dens for conversion. A secrecy more profound than that of the *leads* and the *wells* of Venice, the oblivion of the tomb, enshrouded everything. The Jesuits were the confessors of the Bastille, and of many other prisons; the prisoners who died were buried under false names in the church of the Jesuits. Every means of terror was in their hands, especially those dungeons whence the prisoners occasionally came out with their ears or noses gnawed away by the rats. Not only of terror, but of flattery also—both so potent with female prisoners. The almoner, to render grace more efficacious, employed even *culinary* arguments, starving, feeding, pampering the fair captive according as she yielded or resisted. More than one state-prison is mentioned in which the gaolers and the Jesuits paid alternate visits to the female prisoners, and had children by them. One preferred to strangle herself.

The lieutenant of police went, from time to time, to breakfast at the Bastille. That was reckoned as a visit,—a magisterial supervision. That magistrate was ignorant of everything; and yet it was he alone who gave an account to the minister. One family, one dynasty, Châteauneuf, his son La Vrillière, and his grandson Saint-Florentin (who died in 1777) possessed, for a century, the department of the state-prisons and the *lettres-de-cachet*. For this dynasty to subsist, it was necessary to have prisoners; when the Protestants were liberated, their places were filled up with the Jansenists; next, they took men of letters, philosophers, the Voltaires, Frèrets, Diderots. The minister used to give generously blank *lettres-de-cachet* to the intendants, the bishops, and people in the administration. Saint-Florentin, alone, gave away as many as 50,000. Never had man's dearest treasure, liberty, been more lavishly squandered. These letters were the object of a profitable traffic; they were sold to fathers who wanted to get rid of their sons, and given to pretty women, who were inconvenienced by their husbands. This last cause of imprisonment was one of the most common.



And all through good-nature. The king was too good to refuse a *lettre-de-cachet* to a great lord. The intendent was too good-natured not to grant one at a lady's request. The government-clerks, the mistresses of the clerks, and the friends of these mistresses, through good-nature, civility, or mere politeness, obtained, gave, or lent, those terrible orders by which a man was buried alive. Buried;—for such was the carelessness and levity of those amiable clerks,—almost all nobles, fashionable men, all occupied with their pleasures,—that they never had the time, when once the poor fellow was shut up, to think of his position.

Thus, the *government of grace*, with all its advantages,—descending from the king to the lowest clerk in the administration,—disposed, according to caprice or fancy, of liberty, of life.

Let us understand this system well. Why does such an one succeed? What does he possess, that everything should thrive with him? He has the grace of God, and the king's good grace. Let him who is in disgrace, in this world of grace, go out of the world,—banished, sentenced, and damned.

The Bastille, the *lettre-de-cachet*, is the king's excommunication.

Are the excommunicated to die? No. It would require a decision of the king, a resolution painful to take, which would grieve the king himself. It would be a judgment between him and his conscience. Let us save him the task of judging, of killing. There is a middle term between life and death: a lifeless, buried life. Let us organize a world expressly for oblivion. Let us set falsehood at the gates within and without. in order that life and death be ever uncertain. The living corpse no longer knew anything about his family. "But my wife?" Thy wife is dead—I make a mistake—re-married. "Are any of my friends alive? Do they ever remember me?" "Thy friends, poor fool, why, they were the persons who betrayed thee." Thus the soul of the miserable prisoner, a prey to their ferocious merriment, is fed on derision, calumny, and lies.

Forgotten! O terrible word! That a soul should perish among souls! Had not he whom God created for life the right to live at least in the mind? What mortal shall dare



inflict, even on the most guilty, this worst of deaths,—to be eternally forgotten?

No, do not believe it. Nothing is forgotten,—neither man nor thing. What once has been, cannot be thus annihilated. The very walls will not forget, the pavement will become accomplice, and convey sounds and noises; the air will not forget; from that small skylight, where a poor girl is sewing, at the *Porte Saint-Antoine*, they have seen and understood. Nay, the very Bastille itself will be affected. That surly turnkey is still a man. I see inscribed upon the walls the hymn of a prisoner to the glory of a gaoler, his benefactor.—Poor benefit: A shirt that he gave to that Lazarus, barbarously abandoned, devoured by vermin in his tomb!

Whilst I have been writing these lines, a mountain, a Bastille has been crushing my breast. Alas! why stay so long talking of dilapidated prisons, and wretches whom death has delivered? The world is covered with prisons, from *Spielberg* to *Siberia*, from *Spandau* to *Mont-St.-Michel*. The world is a prison!

Vast silence of the globe, stifled groans and sobs from the ever-silent earth, I hear you but too plainly. The captive mind, dumb among inferior animals, and musing in the barbarous world of *Africa* and *Asia*, thinks, and suffers in our Europe!

Where does it speak, if not in France, in spite of chains? It is ever here that the mute genius of the earth finds a voice,—an organ. The world thinks, France speaks.

And it is precisely on that account that the Bastille of France, the Bastille of Paris (I would rather say the prison of thought), was, of all other Bastilles, execrable, infamous, and accursed. From the last century, Paris was already the voice of the globe. The earth spoke by the voice of three men—*Voltaire*, *Jean-Jacques*, and *Montesquieu*. That the interpreters of the world should behold unworthy threats perpetually suspended over them, that the narrow issue through which the agony of mankind could breathe its sighs, should ever be shut up, was beyond human endurance.

Our fathers shivered that Bastille to pieces, tore away its stones with their bleeding hands, and flung them afar. Afterwards, they seized them again; and, having hewn them into

a different form, in order that they might be trampled under foot by the people for ever, built with them the Bridge of Revolution !

All other prisons had become more merciful ; but this one had become more cruel. From reign to reign, they diminished what the gaolers would laughingly term,—the liberties of the Bastille. The windows were walled up one after another, and other bars were added. During the reign of Louis XVI., the use of the garden and the walk on the towers were prohibited.

About this period two circumstances occurred which added to the general indignation,—Linguet's memoirs, which made people acquainted with the ignoble and ferocious interior ; and, what was more decisive, the unwritten, unprinted case of Latude : whispered mysteriously, and transmitted from mouth to mouth, its effect was only rendered more terrible.

For my part, I must acknowledge the extremely agonizing effect which the prisoner's letters produced on me. Though a sworn enemy to barbarous fictions about everlasting punishments, I found myself praying to God to construct a hell for tyrants.

Ah ! M. de Sartines, Ah ! Madame de Pompadour, how heavy is your burden ! How plainly do we perceive, by that history, how, having once embraced injustice, we go on from bad to worse ; how terror, descending from the tyrant to the slave, returns again more forcibly to torment the tyrant. Having once kept this man a prisoner without judgment, for some trifling fault, Madame de Pompadour and M. de Sartines are obliged to hold him captive for ever, and seal over him with an eternal stone the hell of silence.

But that cannot be. That stone is ever restless ; and a low, terrible voice—a sulphurous blast—is ever arising. In '81, Sartines feels its dread effect,—in '84, the king himself is hurt by it,—in '89, the people know all, see all, even the ladder by which the prisoner escaped. In '93, they guillotine the family of Sartines.

For the confusion of tyrants, it so happened that they had in that prisoner confined a daring, terrible man, whom nothing could subdue, whose voice shook the very walls, whose spirit and audacity were invincible. A body of iron, indestructible, which was to wear out all their prisons, the Bastille, Vincennes,

Charenton, and lastly the horrors of Bicêtre, wherein any other would have perished.

What makes the accusation heavy, overwhelming, and without appeal, is, that this man, good or bad, after escaping twice, twice surrendered himself by his own acts. Once, from his hiding-place, he wrote to Madame de Pompadour, and she caused him to be seized again ! The second time, he goes to Versailles, wishes to speak to the king, reaches his antechamber, and she orders him again to be seized. What ! In not even the king's apartment a sacred asylum ?

I am unfortunately obliged to say that in the feeble, effeminate, declining society of that period, there were a great many philanthropists,—ministers, magistrates, and great lords, to mourn over the adventure ; but not one stirred. Malesherbes wept, and so did Gourgues, and Lamoignon, and Rohan,—they all wept bitterly.

He was lying upon his dunghill at Bicêtre, *literally* devoured by vermin, lodged under ground, and often howling with hunger. He had addressed one more memorial to some philanthropist or other, by means of a drunken turnkey. The latter luckily lost it, and a woman picked it up. She read it, and shuddered ; *she* did not weep, but acted instantly.

Madame Legros was a poor mercer who lived by her work,—by sewing in her shop ; her husband was a private teacher of Latin. She did not fear to embark in that terrible undertaking. She saw with her firm good sense what others did not, or would not, see : that the wretched man was not mad, but the victim of a frightful necessity, by which the government was obliged to conceal and perpetuate the infamy of its old transgressions. She saw it, and was neither discouraged nor afraid. No heroism was ever more complete : she had the courage to undertake ; the energy to persevere ; and the obstinacy to sacrifice every day and every hour ; the courage to despise the threats, the sagacity, and saintly plots of every kind in order to elude and foil the calumny of the tyrants.

For three consecutive years, she persevered in her endeavours with an unheard-of obstinacy ; employing in the pursuit of justice and equity that singular eagerness peculiar to the huntsman or the gamester, and to which we seldom resort but for the gratification of our evil passions.

All kinds of misfortunes beset her ; but she will not give up the cause. Her father dies ; then her mother ; she loses her little business, is blamed by her relations, nay, subjected to villanous suspicion. They tax her with being the mistress of that prisoner in whom she is so much interested. The mistress of that spectre, that corpse, devoured with filth and vermin !

The temptation of temptations, are these complaints, these unjust suspicions about him for whom she is dying and sacrificing herself !

Oh ! It is a grand sight to see that poor woman, so ill-dressed, begging from door to door, courting the valets to gain admittance into the mansions, pleading her cause before grandees, and demanding their assistance.

The police are furious and indignant. Madame Legros may be kidnapped, shut up, lost for ever ; everybody gives her warning. The lieutenant of police sends for her, and threatens her ; he finds her firm and unalterable ; it is she who makes him tremble.

Happily, they manage to get her the protection of Madame Duchesne, a *femme de chambre* to the princesses. She sets out for Versailles, on foot, in the depth of winter ; she was in the seventh month of her pregnancy. The protectress was absent ; she runs after her, sprains her foot, but still runs on. Madame Duchesne sheds many tears, but alas ! what can she do ? One *femme de chambre* against two or three ministers ;—it is a difficult game ! She was holding the memorial, when an *abbé* of the court, who happened to be present, tore it out of her hands, telling her that it was all about a miserable madman, and that she must not interfere.

Nothing more was wanting to freeze the heart of Marie-Antoinette, who had been made acquainted with the matter. If she had tears in her eyes, and they joked her, all was over.

There was hardly a better man in France than the king. At length they applied to him. Cardinal de Rohan (a debauchee, but charitable after all) spoke three times to Louis XVI., who thrice refused to interfere. Louis XVI. was too good not to believe M. de Sartines. He was no longer in power, but that was no reason for dishonouring him, and handing him over to his enemies. Setting Sartines out of the

question, we must say that Louis XVI. was fond of the Bastille, and would not wrong it, or injure its reputation.

The king was very humane. He had suppressed the deep dungeons of the Châtelet, done away with Vincennes and created La Force to receive prisoners for debt, to separate them from criminals.

But the Bastille! the Bastille! That was an old servant not to be lightly ill-treated by the ancient monarchy. It was a mystery of terror, what Tacitus calls, "*Instrumentum regni*."

When the count d'Artois and the Queen, wishing to have Figaro played, read it to him, he merely observed, as an unanswerable objection, "Then must the Bastille be suppressed?"

When the Revolution of Paris took place, in July '89, the king, indifferent enough, seemed to be reconciled to the matter. But when he was informed that the Parisian municipality had ordered the demolition of the Bastille, he seemed as if he had been shot to the heart; "Oh!" said he, "this is awful!"

He was unable, in 1781, to listen to a request that compromised the Bastille. He rejected also the one which Rohan presented to him in favour of Latude. But noble ladies insisted. He then made a conscientious study of the business, read all the papers; they were few, save those of the police and people interested in keeping the victim in prison until death. At length he decided that he was a dangerous man, and that he could *never* restore him to liberty.

Never! Any other person would have stopped there. Well then, what is not done by the king shall be done in spite of him. Madame Legros persists. She is well received by the Condé family, ever discontented and grumbling; welcomed by the young duke of Orleans and his kind-hearted spouse, the daughter of the good Penthievre; and hailed by the philosophers, by the Marquis de Condorcet, perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, by Dupaty, by Villette, Voltaire's quasi son-in-law, &c. &c.

The public voice murmurs louder and louder, like a flood, or the waves of the rising tide. Necker had dismissed Sartines; his friend and successor, Lenoir, had also fallen in his turn. Perseverance will presently be crowned. Latude is obstinately bent on living, and Madame Legros as obstinately bent on delivering Latude.

The queen's man, Breteuil, succeeds in '83: he wished to immortalize her. He permits the Academy to award the prize of virtue to Madame Legros,—to crown her—on the singular condition, that the crown should not be required.

At length, in 1784, they force from Louis XVI. the deliverance of Latude.\* And a few weeks after, comes a strange and whimsical ordinance enjoining the intendants never more to incarcerate anybody, at the request of families, without a *well-grounded reason*, and to indicate the *duration of confinement*, &c. That is to say, they unveiled the depth of the monstrous abyss of arbitrariness into which France had been plunged. She already knew much; but the government confessed still more.

From the priest to the king, from the Inquisition to the Bastille, the road is straight, but long. Holy, holy Revolution, how slowly dost thou come!—I, who have been waiting for thee for a thousand years in the furrows of the middle ages,—what! must I wait still longer?—Oh! how slowly time passes! Oh! how I have counted the hours!—Wilt thou never arrive?

Men believed no longer in its near approach. All had foreseen the Revolution in the middle of the century. Nobody, at the end, believed in it. Far from Mont-Blanc, you see it; when at its foot, you see it no more.

“Alas! it is all over,” said Mably, in 1784; “we have fallen too low; morals have become too depraved. Never, oh! never now will the Revolution appear!”

O ye of little faith, do you not see that as long as it remained among you, philosophers, orators, sophists, it could do nothing? God be praised, now it is everywhere, among the people and in women.—Here is one who, by her persevering, unconquerable will, bursts open the prisons of State; she has taken the Bastille beforehand.—The day when liberty—reason, emerges from arguments, and descends into nature, into the heart (and the heart of hearts is woman), all is over. Everything artificial is destroyed.—O Rousseau, now we

\* Latude's admirable letters are still unpublished, save the few quoted by Delort. They refute but too well the vain polemics of 1787.



understand thee ; thou was truly right in saying, “ Return to nature ! ”

A woman is fighting at the Eastille. Women gain the 5th of October. As early as February '89, I read with emotion the courageous letter of the women and girls of Angers : “ Having read the decrees of the male portion of our youthful community (*messieurs de la jeunesse*), we declare that *we will join the nation*, reserving to ourselves the care of the baggage and provisions, and such consolations and services as may depend on us ; we will perish rather than abandon our husbands, lovers, sons, and brothers.”

O France, you are saved ! O world, you are saved !—Again do I behold in the heavens my youthful star in which I so long placed my hope.—the star of Joan of Arc. What matters, if the maid, changing her sex, has become a youth, Hocche, Mareeau, Joubert, or Kléber !

Grand period, sublime moment, when the most warlike of men are nevertheless the harbingers of peace ! When Right, so long wept for, is found at the end of ages ; when Grace, in whose name Tyranny had crushed us, is found to be consonant, identical with Justice.

What is the ancient *régime*, the king and the priest in the old monarchy ? Tyranny, in the name of Grace.

What is the Revolution ? The re-action of equity, the tardy advent of Eternal Justice.

O Justice, my mother ! Right, my father ! ye who are but one with God !

Whom else should I invoke, I, one of the crowd, one of those ten millions of men, who would never have existed, but for our Revolution.

O Justice, pardon me ! I believed you were austere and hard-hearted, and I did not perceive that you were identical with Love and Grace. And that is why I have been no enthusiast of the middle ages, which have ever repeated the word Love without performing the offices of Love.

But now, absorbed in deep reflection, and with all the ardour of my heart, I humbly crave forgiveness, O heavenly Justice of God.

For thou art truly Love, and identical with Grace.

And as thou art Justice, thou wilt support me in this book,



where my path has been marked out by the emotions of my heart and not by private interest, nor by any thought of this sublunar world. Thou wilt be just towards me, and I will be so towards all. For whom then have I written this, but for thee, Eternal Justice?

JANUARY 31st, 1847.

## BOOK I.

APRIL TO JULY, 1789.

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### CHAPTER I.

ELECTIONS OF 1789.

The whole People called to choose the Electors, and send in their Complaints and Requests.—The Ministry had relied on the Incapacity of the People.—Certainty of the Popular Instinct ; Firmness of the People ; their Unanimity.—The Convocation of the States, and the Elections of Paris delayed.—First Act of the Sovereignty of the Nation.—The Electors troubled by a Riot—The Révillon Riot and the Persons interested in it.—The Elections completed.—(January to April, 1789.)

THE convocation of the States-General, in 1789, is the true era of the birth of the people. It called the whole nation to the exercise of their rights.

They could at least write their complaints, their wishes, and choose the electors.

Small republican states had already admitted all their members to a participation of political rights ; but never had a great kingdom,—an empire like France. The thing was new, not only in French annals, but even in those of the world.

Accordingly, when, for the first time, in the course of ages, these words were heard : *All shall assemble to elect,\* all*

\* See the *Actes* in the first vol. of the *Moniteur*. The *tax-payers of more than twenty-five years of age* were to choose the electors, who were to name the deputies, and concur in the drawing-up of the *returns*. As taxation affected everybody, at least by poll-tax, the whole of the population, excepting servants, was thus called upon.

shall send in their complaints, there was an immense, profound commotion, like an earthquake; the mass felt the shock even in obscure and mute regions, where movement would have been least expected.

*All the towns* elected, and not the *good* towns only, as in the ancient States-General; country districts also elected, and not the towns alone.

It is affirmed that five millions of men took part in the election.

Grand, strange, surprising scene! To see a whole people emerging, at once, from nonentity to existence, who, till then silent, suddenly found a voice.

The same appeal of equality was addressed to populations, prodigiously unequal, not only by position, but by worship, by their moral state and ideas. How would that people answer? That was a great question. The exchequer on one side, feudality on the other,\* seemed striving to brutalise them under the weight of miseries. Royalty had deprived them of their municipal rights,—of that education which they derived from business connected with the commune. The clergy, the teachers thrust upon them, had not taught them for a long time past. They seemed to have done everything to render them dull, dumb, speechless, and senseless, and then they said to them, “Arise now, walk, and speak!”

They had relied, too much relied, upon that incapacity; otherwise they would never have ventured to make this grand move. The first who pronounced the name of the States-General, —the parliaments which demanded them,—the ministers who promised them,—Necker who convoked them,—all, believed the people incapable of taking any serious part therein. They only thought, by this solemn convocation of a great lifeless mass, to frighten the privileged classes. The court, which was itself the privilege of privileges, the abuse of abuses, had no desire to make war on them. It merely hoped, by the forced contributions of the clergy and nobility, to fill the public coffers, from which they filled their own.

And what did the queen desire? Given up to *parvenus*,

\* This expression is not ill-employed. Feudality was very oppressive in 1789, more fiscal than ever, being entirely in the hands of intendants, attorneys, &c. Names and forms had changed,—nothing more.

lampooned by the nobility, gradually despised, and alone, she wanted to have a slight revenge on those revilers, to intimidate them, and oblige them to rally round the king. She saw her brother Joseph attempting, in the Netherlands, to oppose the smaller towns to the larger, to the prelates and grandees.\* That example, doubtless, rendered her less adverse to Necker's ideas; she consented to give to the *Tiers* (or Third Estate) as many deputies as the nobility and clergy had together.

And what did Necker desire? Two things at once,—to pretend much and do little.

For ostentation, for glory,—to be celebrated and extolled by the saloons and the immense body of the public, it was necessary to double generously the number of the deputies of the Third Estate.

In reality, they wanted to be generous at a cheap rate.† The Third Estate, more or less numerous, would never be anything but one of three orders,—would have but one vote against two; Necker reckoned surely on maintaining the voting by orders, which had so often before paralysed the ancient States-General. The Third Estate, moreover, had at all times been very modest, very respectful, too well-bred to wish to be represented by men of its own class. It had often named nobles for deputies, mostly newly-created nobles, parliament people and others, who prided themselves on voting with the

\* See, for the revolution in Brabant, so different from ours, the documents collected by Gachard (1834), Gerard (1842), and the histories by Gross-Hoffinger (1837), Borgnet (1844), and Ramshorn (1845). That revolution of *abbés*, of which the Capuchin-friars were the terrorists, deceived everybody here (in France), both the court and our Jacobins. Dumouriez alone comprehended, and said, that it was primitively the work of the powerful *abbés* of the Netherlands. M. Mercy d'Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador, believed at first, and doubtless made Marie-Antoinette believe, that in France, as in Belgium, the peril was on the side of the aristocracy. Hence, many false steps.

† For all this, one must see Necker's curious confessions, his pleading for the Third Estate. (*Œuvres*, vi., 419, 443, &c.) Therein, as in all his works, one always perceives the foreigner anything but esteemed in France, a clerk ever clerk-like, who stands bowing before the nobility,—a Protestant who wants to find grace with the clergy. To reassure the privileged classes about the poor Third Estate, he presents it to them feeble, timid, and subservient; he seems to be telegraphing secretly with them. He, moreover, gives them to understand that his client is an easy sort of person,—easily duped.

nobility, against the interests of the Third Estate which had named them.

A strange circumstance, but a proof that they had no real intention,—that they merely wanted by this grand phantasmagoria, to overcome the selfishness of the privileged classes, and open their purses, is, that in these States, called against them, they managed nevertheless to secure them a predominant influence.\* The popular assemblies were to elect by acclamation (*à haute voix*). They did not suppose that inferior people, in such a mode of election, in presence of the nobles and notables, would possess sufficient firmness to oppose them,—enough assurance to pronounce other names than those which were dictated to them.

In calling the people of the country, of the villages, to the election, Necker, no doubt, expected to do something very political; in proportion as the democratical spirit was aroused in the towns, in such proportion the country-places were influenced by the nobles and the clergy,—the possessors of two thirds of the lands. Millions of men arrived thus at election, who were dependent on the privileged classes, as tenants, cultivators, &c., or who indirectly would be influenced, or intimidated, by their agents, stewards, attorneys, and men of business. Necker knew, from the experience of Switzerland and the history of the petty cantons, that universal suffrage may be, with certain conditions, the stay of the aristocracy. The notables whom he consulted, so completely adopted this idea, that they wanted to make even their servants electors. Necker would not consent to it, as then the election would have fallen entirely into the hands of the large proprietors.

The result deceived all their calculations.† This people, though wholly unprepared, showed a very sure instinct. When they were called to election and informed of their rights, it was

\* The privileged orders were doubly favoured: 1st. They were not subjected to the two degrees of election; they elected their deputies in a direct manner. 2dly. The nobles were *all* electors, and not *the nobles who had fiefs* exclusively, as in the ancient states; the privilege was the more odious still, as being extended to a whole generation of nobles; the pretensions were the more ridiculous.

† Very uncertain calculations. The king confesses, in the convocation of Paris, that he does not know the number of the inhabitants of the best-known town in the kingdom, that he cannot guess the number of the electors, &c.

found that little remained to be taught them. In that prodigious movement of five or six millions of men, there was some sort of hesitation, through their ignorance of forms, and especially, because the majority knew not how to read. But they knew how to speak ; they knew how, in presence of their lords, without infringing upon their respectful habits, or laying aside their humble demeanour, to select worthy electors, who all nominated safe and certain deputies.

The admission of the country districts to election had the unexpected result of placing even among the deputies of the privileged orders a numerous democracy, of whom they had never thought, two hundred *curés* and more, very hostile to their bishops. In Brittany, and in the South, the peasant willingly nominated his *curé*, who, moreover, alone knowing how to write, received the votes, and directed all the election.\*

The people of the towns, rather better prepared, having been somewhat enlightened by the philosophy of the age, evinced an admirable eagerness, a lively consciousness of their rights. This appeared plain at the elections, by the rapidity, the certainty with which crowds of inexperienced men took this their first political step. It appeared evident in the uniformity of the memorials (*cahiers*) in which they recorded their complaints,—an unexpected, powerful combination, which imparted irresistible strength to the will of the people. How long had those complaints existed in every heart ! It was but too easy to write them. Many a memorial of our districts, containing almost a code, was begun at midnight, and finished at three in the morning.†

A movement so vast, so varied, so wholly unprepared, and yet so unanimous, is most wonderful ! All took part in it, and (except an insignificant number) they all desired the same thing.‡

Unanimous ! There was a complete and unreserved concord, a perfectly simple state of things,—the nation on one side and privilege on the other. Yet, there was no possible

\* However, in several *communes*, sworn scribes were appointed to write down the votes.—Duchatellier, *La Revolution en Bretagne*, i., 281.

† *Mémoires de Bailly*, i, 12.

‡ The same thing in every essential point. To which every corporation and every town added something special.

distinction then in the nation between the people and the citizens ;\* only one distinction appeared,—the instructed and the ignorant ; the educated alone spoke and wrote ; but they wrote the thoughts of all. They drew up into a formula the general demands ; and they were the demands of the mute masses as much as, and more than their own.

Oh ! who would not be touched by the remembrance of that unrivalled moment, when we started into life ? It was short-lived ; but it remains for us the ideal whereunto we shall ever tend, the hope of the future ! O sublime Concord, in which the rising liberties of classes, subsequently in opposition, embraced so tenderly, like brothers in the cradle,—shall we never more see thee return upon our earth ?

This union of the different classes, this grand appearance of the people in their formidable unity, struck terror to the court which used every effort with the king to prevail on him to break his word. The Polignac faction had contrived, in order to place him in an uncomfortable position, to get the princes to write and sign an audacious letter in which they menaced the king, assumed to be the chiefs of the privileged classes, spoke of refusing taxes, of divisions, almost of civil war.

And yet, how could the king elude the States ? Recommended by the Court of Aides, demanded by the Parliaments, and by the Notables, promised by Brienne, and again by Necker, they were at length to open on the 27th of April. They were further prorogued till the 4th of May. A perilous delay ! To so many voices then arising another was added, alas ! one often heard in the eighteenth century,—*the voice of the earth*—the desolate, sterile earth refusing food to man ! The winter had been terrible ; the summer was dry and gave nothing : and famine began. The bakers being uneasy, and always in peril before the starving riotous crowd, themselves denounced companies who were monopolising the corn. Only one thing restrained the people, and made them fast patiently and wait,—their hope in the States-General. A vague hope ; but it

\* It was a vital error of the authors of the *Histoire Parlementaire*, to mark this distinction at that important moment when nobody saw it. It will come but too soon ; we must wait. Thus to be blind to the real consequence of facts, and to drag them forcibly forward before their time by a sort of systematic pre-arrangement, is precisely contrary to history.



supported them ; the forthcoming assembly was a Messiah ; it had only to speak, and the stones were to change into bread.

The elections, so long delayed, were still longer postponed at Paris. They were not convoked till the eve of the assembling of the States. It was hoped that the deputies would not be present at the first sittings, and that before their arrival, they would secure the separation of the three orders, which gave a majority to the privileged.

There was another cause for discontent, and one most serious for Paris. In that city, the most enlightened in the kingdom, election was subjected to more severe conditions. A special regulation, made after the convocation, called, as primary electors, not all who were taxed, but those only who paid a rate of six francs.

Paris was filled with troops, every street with patrols, and every place of election surrounded with soldiers. Arms were loaded in the street, in face of the crowd.

In presence of these vain demonstrations, the electors were very firm. Scarcely had they met, when they rejected the presidents given to them by the king. Out of sixty districts, three only re-appointed the president named by the monarch, making him declare that he presided by election. A serious measure,—the first act of the national sovereignty. And it was indeed that which it was necessary to acquire,—it was Right that it was necessary to found. Questions of finance and reform would come afterwards. Without Right, what guarantee was there, or what serious reform ?

The electors, created by these district assemblies, acted in precisely the same manner. They elected as president the advocate Target ; Camus, the advocate of the clergy, as vice-president, and the academician Bailly and Doctor Guillotin, a philanthropical physician, as secretaries.\*

The court was astonished at the decision, firmness, and re-

\* This assembly, so firm in its first proceedings, was nevertheless composed of notables, functionaries, merchants, or advocates. The latter led the assembly ; they were Camus, Target, Treilhard, the advocate of the *Ferme Générale*, Lacretelle Senior, and Desèze. In the second rank came the academicians,—Bailly, Thonin, and Cadet, Gaillard, Suard, Marmontel. Next, the bankers, such as Lecouteulx, and the printers, librarians, and stationers, Pankoucke, Baudouin, Réveillon, &c.

gularity, with which twenty-five thousand primary electors, so new to political life, then proceeded. There was no disturbance. Assembled in the churches, they transferred thither the emotion of the great and holy task they were accomplishing. The boldest measure, the destitution of the presidents named by the king, was effected without any noise or exclamation, with the forcible simplicity imparted by a consciousness of right.

The electors, under a president of their choice, were sitting at the Archbishop's Palace, and about to make a total of the district polls, and to draw up one common resolution; they were already agreed on one point, which Sieyes had recommended,—the utility of prefacing with a declaration of the rights of man. In the middle of this delicate and difficult metaphysical task, they were interrupted by a terrible uproar. A ragged multitude had come to demand the head of one of their colleagues, of Réveillon, an elector,—a paper-manufacturer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Réveillon was concealed; but the riot was not less dangerous on that account. It was now the 28th of April; the States-General, promised for the 27th, and then postponed again till the 4th of May, ran a great risk, if the riots lasted, of being adjourned once more.

The riot broke out precisely on the 27th, and it was but too easy to spread, entertain, and increase it, among a starving population. A report had been spread in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, that Réveillon, the paper-manufacturer,—a workman grown rich,—had said unfeelingly that it was necessary to lower wages to fifteen sous a day; and, it was added, that he was to receive the decoration of the *cordons-noirs*. That report was followed by a great commotion. First, a band, in front of Réveillon's door, take his effigy, decorated with the *cordons-noirs*, carry it in procession to La Grève, and burn it with much ceremony beneath the windows of the Hôtel-de-Ville, before the eyes of the municipal authority, who remain perfectly unmoved. This authority and the others, so vigilant just before, seemed fast asleep. The lieutenant of police, the prevost Flesselles, and Berthier the intendant,—all those court-agents, who lately surrounded the elections with soldiers, had lost their activity.

The band exclaimed aloud that it would go, on the morrow, to do justice at Réveillon's. It kept its word. The police, though so well warned, used no precaution. The colonel of the

French Guards sends, of his own accord, some thirty men,—a ridiculous force ; in a compact crowd of a thousand or two thousand pillagers and a hundred thousand idle spectators, the soldiers will not, cannot, act. The house is broken open, and everything demolished, shattered to pieces, and burnt. Nothing was carried away, except five hundred *louis d'or*.<sup>\*</sup> Many took up their quarters in the cellars, drank the wine, and the colours of the manufactory, mistaking them for wine.

What seems incredible is, that this shameful scene lasted all day. It took place too at the very entrance of the faubourg, under the cannon of the Bastille, at the gate of the fort. Réveillon, who was concealed there, saw all from the towers.

A few companies of the French Guards were sent from time to time, who fired, first with powder, and next with ball. The pillagers paid no attention to them, though they had only stones to throw in return. Late, very late, the commandant, Besenval, sent some Swiss ; the pillagers still resisted, and killed a few men ; the soldiers replied by some destructive discharges, which left a number of dead and wounded on the pavement. Many of these bodies in rags had money about them.

If, during those two long days, when the magistrates were asleep and Besenval abstained from sending troops, the faubourg Saint-Antoine had allowed itself to be seduced to follow the band that was sacking Réveillon's house,—if fifty thousand workmen, without either work or bread, had, on that example, set about pillaging the rich mansions, everything would have changed its aspect ; the court would then have an excellent

<sup>\*</sup> According to the statement of Réveillon himself : *Exposé justificatif*, p. 422, (printed at the end of Ferrières). The *Histoire Parlementaire* is again inexact here. It makes of all this, without the least proof, a war of the people against the citizens. It exaggerates the extent of the riot, the number of the dead, &c. Bailly, on the contrary, and no less wrongfully, in p. 28 of his *Memoirs*, reduces it to nothing : "Nobody perished, as far as I know." A very important testimony, on the Réveillon riot, is that of the illustrious surgeon Desault, who received several of the wounded at the Hôtel-Dieu : "*Ils n'avaient l'air que du crime foudroyé ; au contraire, les blessés de la Bastille,*" &c. : See *l'Œuvre des sept Jours*, p. 411. What showed plainly that the people did not consider the pillage of Réveillon's house as a patriotic act is, that they were near hanging, on the 16th of July, a man whom they mistook for the *abbé Roy*, accused of having excited this riot (Bailly, ii., p. 51), and of having subsequently offered to the court a means of slaughtering Paris.—(*Procès-verbal des Electeurs*, ii., p. 46.)

motive to concentrate an army on Paris and Versailles, and a specious pretext for adjourning the States. But the great mass of the faubourg remained honest, and abstained; it looked on, without moving. The riot, thus confined to a few hundred people, drunkards and thieves, became a disgrace to the authority that permitted it. Besenval at length found his part too ridiculous; he acted, and terminated all very roughly. The court did not thank him for it; it durst not blame him, but it did not say one word to him.\*

The parliament could not, for its honour, dispense with opening an inquiry; but the inquiry stopped short. It has been said, without sufficient proof, that it was forbidden in the king's name to proceed.

Who were the instigators? Perhaps nobody. Fire, on those stormy occasions, may burst forth of its own accord. People did not fail to accuse "the revolutionary party." What was that party? As yet, there was no active association.

It was said that the Duke of Orleans had given money. Why? What did he then gain by it? The great movement then beginning offered to his ambition too many legal chances, for him, at that period, to need to have recourse to riots. True, he was led on by intriguing persons, ready for anything; but their plan at this period was entirely directed towards the States-General; they felt sure, from their duke being the only popular one among the princes, that he was about to take the lead. Every event that might delay the States, appeared to them a misfortune.

Who desired to delay them? Who found an advantage in terrifying the electors? Who derived a profit from riot?

The court alone, we must confess. The affair happened so exactly at the right time for it, that it might be believed to be the author. It is nevertheless more probable that it did not

\* *Mémoires de Besenval*, ii., p. 347.—Madame de Genlis and other friends of the *ancien régime*, will have it, that these memoirs, so overwhelming against them, were drawn up by the Vicomte de Ségur. Let it be so: he must then have written from the notes and memory of Besenval. The memoirs do not the less belong to the latter. Besenval was, I know, but little able to write; but without his *confidences*, the amiable lampooner would never have made this book so strong, so historical under an aspect of levity; the truth bursts forth and shines there, often with a terrible light; nothing remains but to cast down our eyes.

begin it, but saw it with pleasure, did nothing to prevent it, and regretted it was so soon over. The faubourg Saint-Antoine had not then its terrible reputation ; a riot under the very cannon of the Bastille did not seem dangerous.

The nobles of Brittany had given an example of troubling the legal operations of the provincial States, by exciting the peasants, and pitting against the people a populace mingled with lackeys. Even at Paris, a newspaper, the *Ami du Roi*, a few days before the Réveillon affair, seemed to be attempting the same manœuvre :—" What matter these elections ? " said this journal, in a hypocritical tone, " the poor will ever be poor ; the lot of the most interesting portion of the kingdom is forgotten," &c. As if the first results of the Revolution which these elections were beginning,—the suppression of tithes and that of the *octroi* duties, and the *aides*, and the sale, at a low price, of half the lands in the kingdom, had not produced the most sudden amelioration in the condition of the poor that any people had ever witnessed !

On the morning of the 29th, all had become quiet again. The assembly of the electors were able peaceably to resume their labours. They lasted till the 20th of May ; and the court obtained the advantage that it had proposed to itself by this tardy convocation,—the preventing the deputation of Paris from being present at the first sittings of the States-General. The last person elected by Paris, and by France, was he who, in public opinion, was the first of all, he who had traced beforehand for the Revolution so straight and simple a path, and had marked its first steps, one by one. Everything was marching forward, according to the plan given by Sieyès with a motion majestic, pacific, and firm, like the Law. Law alone was about to reign ; after so many ages of despotism and caprice, the time was arriving when nobody would be right against Right.

Let, then, those dreaded States-General at length assemble and open. They who convoked them, and now would wish they had never spoken of them, cannot alter the matter. It is a rising ocean : causes infinite and profound, acting from the depths of ages, agitate the boiling mass. Bring against it, I pray you, all the armies in the world, or an infant's finger ; it makes no difference. God is urging it forward : tardy justice, the expiation of the past, the salvation of the future !

## CHAPTER II.

## OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

Procession of the States-General.—Opening on the 5th of May.—Necker's Speech.—Question about the Separation of the Orders.—The Third Estate invites the others to unite.—Inaction of the Assembly.—Snares laid for it.—(4th of May to 9th of June, 1789.)

ON the eve of the opening of the States-General, the Mass of the Holy Ghost was solemnly said at Versailles. It was certainly that day or never, that they might sing the prophetic hymn :—"Thou wilt create peoples, and the face of the earth shall be renewed."

That grand day was the 4th of May. The twelve hundred deputies, the king, the queen, the whole court, heard the *Veni Creator* at the Church of Notre-Dame. Next, the immense procession, passing through the whole town, repaired to Saint-Louis. The broad streets of Versailles, lined with French guards and Swiss, and hung with the crown tapestry, could not contain the crowd. All Paris was there. The windows, the very roofs, were loaded with people. The balconies were adorned with precious stuffs, and ornamented with brilliant women, in the coquettish and whimsical costume of that period, diversified with feathers and flowers. All that mass of beings was moved, affected, full of anxiety and hope.\* Something grand was beginning. What would be its progress, issue, and results? who could tell? The splendour of such a sight, so varied and majestic, and the music which was heard at different intervals, silenced every other thought.

A grand day,—the last of peace, yet the first of an immense future!

The passions were doubtless strong, diverse, and opposite, but not embittered, as they soon became. Even they who had the least desired this new era, could not help sharing the common emotion. A deputy of the nobility confesses that he wept

\* See the eye-witnesses, Ferrières, Staël, &c.



for joy : “ I saw France, my native land, reclining on Religion, saying to us : ‘ Stifle your quarrels.’ Tears flowed from my eyes. My God, my country, my fellow-citizens, had become myself.”

At the head of the procession appeared first a mass of men clothed in black,—the strong, deep battalion of the five hundred and fifty deputies of the Third Estate ; in that number, more than three hundred jurists, advocates, or magistrates, represented forcibly the advent of the law. Modest in their dress, firm in their look and deportment, they marched forward still united, without any distinction of party, all happy on that grand day, which they had made and which was their victory.

The brilliant little troop of the deputies of the nobility came next with their plumed hats, their laces, and gold ornaments. The applause that had welcomed the Third Estate suddenly ceased. Among those nobles, however, about forty seemed as warm friends of the people as the men of the Third-Estate.

The same silence for the clergy. In this order, two orders were distinctly perceptible : a Nobility and a Third Estate : some thirty prelates in lawn sleeves and violet robes ; and apart, and separated from them by a choir of musicians, the humble troop of the two hundred *curés*, in their black, priestly robes.

On beholding that imposing mass of twelve hundred men animated with noble passion, an attentive spectator would have been struck with one thing in particular. They presented very few strongly-delineated individualities ; doubtless many men both honourable and of highly prized talents, but none of those who, by the united authority of genius and character, have the right to transport the multitude,—no great inventor,—no hero. The powerful innovators who had opened the way for that century, then existed no more. Their thought alone remained to guide nations. Great orators arose to express and apply that thought ; but they did not add to it. The glory of the Revolution in her earlier moments,—but her peril also,—which might render her less certain in her progress, was to go without men, to go alone, by the transport of ideas, on the faith of pure reason, without idols and false gods.

The body of the nobility, which presented itself as the depository and guardian of our military glory, showed not one



celebrated general. "Obscure men of illustrious origin were all those grand lords of France." One alone perhaps excited some interest, he who, in spite of the court, had been the first to take a part in the American war,—the young and fair Lafayette. Nobody then suspected the prominent part which fortune was about to thrust upon him. The Third Estate, in its obscure mass, already contained the Convention. But who could have seen it? Who recognised, among that crowd of advocates, the stiff form and pale face of a certain lawyer of Arras?

Two things were noticed: the absence of Sieyes, and the presence of Mirabeau.

Sieyes had not yet come: in that grand movement, people looked for him whose singular sagacity had seen, regulated, calculated, and directed it beforehand.

Mirabeau was present, and attracted everybody's attention. His immense mass of hair, his lion-like head, stamped with extreme ugliness, were astounding, almost frightful; nobody could take his eyes off him. He indeed was visibly a man, and the others were but shadows,—a man, unfortunately, of his time and class, vicious, like the higher society of the day, moreover scandalous, noisy, and courageous in vice: that is what ruined him. The world was full of the romance of his adventures, amours, and passions. For he had had passions, violent, furious ones. Who then had such? And the tyranny of those passions, so exacting and absorbing, had often led him very low. Poor by the harsh treatment of his family, he suffered moral misery, the vices of the poor besides those of the rich. Family tyranny, state tyranny, moral, internal tyranny,—that of passion. Ah! nobody could hail more fervently that aurora of liberty. He did not despair of there finding liberty, the regeneration of the soul; he used to say so to his friends.\* He was about to grow young with France, and throw aside his old stained cloak. Only, it was necessary to live longer; on the threshold of this new life opening before him, though strong, ardent, and impassioned, he had nevertheless seriously injured his constitution; his complexion was altered, and his cheeks had fallen. No matter! He still bore his enormous

\* Et Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 27.

head erect, and his looks were full of audacity. Everybody seemed to forebode in him the loud appalling voice of France.

The Third Estate was in general applauded ; next, among the nobility, the Duke of Orleans alone ; and lastly the King, whom they thanked for having convoked the States. Such was the justice of the people.

On the passage of the Queen, there were a few murmurs ; a few women shouted : “ *Vive le duc d’Orleans !* ” thinking to pique her the more by naming her enemy. This made a great impression upon her ; she was nearly fainting, and they had to support her ;\* but she recovered very soon, carrying erect her haughty and still handsome countenance. She attempted from that moment to meet the public hatred with a steadfast, disdainful stare. A sad effort, which did not heighten her beauty. In her solemn portrait which was left us in 1788, by her painter, Madame Lebrun, who loved her, and must have adored her with her very affection, we perceive nevertheless something already repulsive, disdainful, and hardened.†

Thus this grand festival of peace and union, showed symptoms of war. It pointed out a day for France to unite and embrace in one common thought, and at the same time went the very way to divide it. On merely beholding that diversity of costumes imposed on the deputies, one found the harsh but true expression of Sieyes at once realised : “ Three orders ? no : three nations ! ”

The court had hunted into old books, to find out the odious details of a gothic ceremonial, those oppositions of classes, those signs of social distinctions and hatred which it should rather have buried in oblivion. Blazonry, figures, and symbols, after Voltaire, after Figaro ! It was late. To tell the truth, it was not so much the mania for old costumes that had guided the court, as the secret pleasure of mortifying and lowering those petty people who, at the elections, had been

\* Campan, ii., p. 37.

† Compare the three portraits at Versailles. In the first (in white satin) she is a coquette, still pleasing ; she feels she is loved. In the second (in red velvet and furs) surrounded by her children ; her daughter is leaning gently upon her ; but all in vain ; the want of feeling is incurable ; her look is fixed, dull, and singularly harsh (1787). In the third (in blue velvet, 1788), alone, with a book in her hand, quite a queen, but melancholy and unfeeling.

acting the part of kings, and to remind them of their low origin. Weakness was playing at the dangerous game of humiliating the strong for the last time.

As early as the 3rd of May, on the eve of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, the deputies being presented at Versailles, the king, at that moment of cordiality and easy emotion, chilled the deputies, who had almost all arrived favourably disposed towards him. Instead of receiving them mingled together by provinces, he made them enter by orders: the clergy, the nobility first—then, after a pause, the Third Estate.

They would willingly have imputed such petty insolence to the officers and valets; but Louis XVI. showed but too plainly that he himself was tenacious of the old ceremonial. At the sitting on the 5th, the king having covered himself, and the nobility after him, the Third Estate wished to do the same; but the king, to prevent it from thus assuming an equality with the nobility, preferred to uncover himself.

Who would believe that this mad court remembered and regretted the absurd custom of making the Third Estate harangue on their knees. They were unwilling to dispense from this ceremony expressly, and preferred deciding that the president of the Third should make no speech whatever. That is to say, that, at the end of two hundred years of separation and silence, the king dismissed his people and forbade them to speak.

On the 5th of May, the Assembly opened, not in the king's palace, but in the Paris avenue, in the *Salle des Menus*. That hall, which unfortunately no longer exists, was immense; it was able to contain, besides the twelve hundred deputies, four thousand auditors.

An ocular witness, Madame de Staël, Necker's daughter, who had gone thither to behold her father applauded, tells us accordingly that he was so, and that on Mirabeau taking his place, a few murmurs were heard. Murmurs against the immoral man? That brilliant society, dying of its vices, and present at its last festival, had no right to be severe.\*

\* "When the king went and placed himself upon the throne, in the middle of that assembly, I experienced, for the first time, a feeling of dread. First, I noticed that the queen was much moved; she arrived later than the hour appointed, and the colour of her complexion was altered."—Staël, *Considérations*, i., ch. xvi.

The Assembly had to suffer three speeches,—the king's, that of the keeper of the seals, and Necker's, all on the same text, and all unworthy of the occasion. The king at length found himself in presence of the nation, and he had no paternal speech to utter, not one word from his heart for their hearts. The exordium was an awkward, timid, sullen grumbling about the spirit of innovation. He expressed his sensibility for the two superior orders, "who showed themselves disposed to renounce their pecuniary privileges." A pre-occupation of money prevailed throughout the three discourses; little or nothing on the question of right, that which filled and exalted every soul, the right of equality. The king and his two ministers, in awkward phrase, in which bombastic style contends alternately with baseness, seem convinced that the matter in question is merely one of taxation, of money, subsistence,—a question of feeding. They believe that if the privileged classes grant, as alms, to the Third Estate an equality of taxation, everything will be amicably settled at once.\* Hence, three eulogiums, in the three speeches, on the sacrifice of the superior orders, who are so kind as to forego their exemption. These eulogiums go on even *crescendo* up to Necker, who sees no heroism in history comparable to it.

These eulogiums, which look rather like an invitation, announce too clearly that this admirable and extolled sacrifice is not yet made. Let it be made then, and quickly! This is the whole question for the king and the ministers, who have called the Third Estate there as a bugbear, and would willingly send it away. They have as yet but partial, dubious assurances of that great sacrifice: a few lords have offered it, but they have been laughed at by the others. Several members of the clergy, contrary to the known opinion of the Assembly of the clergy, have given the same hope. The two orders are in no great haste to explain themselves in this matter; the decisive word cannot leave their lips; it sticks in their throat. It requires two months, and the most serious and terrible cir-

\* First, to speak only of money, what was called the *impôt* was but a very small portion of the total impost, of what was paid under different names to the clergy and nobility, as tithes or feudal tributes. And then again, money was not all. For the people, the question was not to pick up a few sous flung to them, but indeed to assume their rights: nothing more and nothing less.

circumstances,—the victory of the Third Estate,—for the clergy, on the 26th of June, at length subdued, to renounce, and even then the nobility to *promise* only to do the same.

Necker spoke for three hours on finance and morality : “There is nothing,” said he, “without public morality and private morality.” His speech was not the less on that account an immoral enumeration of the means possessed by the king to do without the States-General, and continue despotism. The States, from that moment, were a pure gift, a granted and revocable favour.

He avowed imprudently that the king was *uneasy*. He expressed the desire that the two superior orders, remaining alone and free, should accomplish their sacrifices, with the exception that they might unite with the Third Estate in order subsequently to discuss questions of common interest. A dangerous insinuation ! The minister being once free to derive the taxes from those rich sources of large property, would not have insisted much on obtaining the union of the orders. The privileged classes would have preserved their false majority ; and two orders leagued against one would have prevented every reform. What matter ! The bankruptcy being avoided, the scarcity having ceased, and public opinion slumbering again, the question of right of security was adjourned, and inequality and despotism strengthened ; Necker reigned, or rather the court, who, once safe from the danger, would have sent the sentimental banker back to Geneva.

On the 6th of May, the deputies of the Third Estate took possession of the large hall, and the impatient crowd, that had been besieging the doors, rushed in after them.

The nobility apart, and the clergy apart, take up their quarters in their chambers, and, without losing time, decide that the powers ought to be verified by each order and in its own circle. The majority was great among the nobility, and small among the clergy ; a great many curates wanted to join the Third Estate. The Third, strong in its great number, and master of the large hall, declares that *it is waiting for the two other orders*. The emptiness of that immense hall seemed to accuse their absence : the very hall spoke.

The question of the union of the orders contained every other. That of the Third, already double in number, was

likely to gain the votes of some fifty nobles and a hundred curates, thereby commanding the two orders with an immense majority, and becoming their judges in everything. Privilege judged by those against whom it was established ! It was easy to foresee the sentence.

So, the Third waited for the clergy and the nobility : it awaited in its strength, and patiently, like everything immortal. The privileged were agitated ; they turned round, when too late, towards the source of privilege, the king, their natural centre, which they themselves had disturbed. Thus, in that time of expectation, which lasted a month or more, things became classed according to their affinity : the privileged with the king,—the Assembly with the people.

It lived with them, spoke with them, all the doors being wide open ; and as yet no barriers. Paris was sitting at Versailles, pell-mell with the deputies. A continual communication existed all along the road. The assembly of the electors of Paris, and the irregular tumultuous assembly held by the crowd in the Palais-Royal, were asking every moment for news of the deputies ; they questioned with avidity whoever came from Versailles. The Third, that saw the court becoming more and more irritated, and surrounding itself with soldiers, felt it had but one defence, the crowd that was listening to it, and the press, which caused it to be listened to by the whole kingdom. The very day of the opening of the States, the court endeavoured to stifle the press ; a decree of the Council suppressed and condemned the journal of the States-General, published by Mirabeau ; another decree forbade the publication of any periodical without permission. Thus was censorship, which for several months had remained inactive and as if suspended, re-established in face of the assembled nation,—re-established for the necessary and indispensable communications of the deputies and those who had deputed them. Mirabeau paid but little attention to this, and went on publishing under this title : *Letters to my Constituents*. The assembly of the electors of Paris, still working at their written resolutions (*cahiers*) left off (on the 7th of May), to protest unanimously against the decree of the Council.\* This

\* *Procès-verbal des électeurs, rédigé par Bailly et Duveyrier, i., 34.*



was the first time Paris interfered in general affairs. The great and capital question of the liberty of the press was thus carried in a trice. The court might now bring together its cannon and its armies ; a more powerful artillery, that of the press, was henceforth thundering in the ears of the people ; and all the kingdom heard it.

On the 7th of May, the Third, on the proposal of Malouet and Mounier, permitted some of its members to invite the clergy and the nobility to come and take their seats. The nobility went on and formed themselves into an assembly. The clergy, more divided and more timorous, wanted to see what course things would take ; the prelates, moreover, believing that, in time, they should gain votes among the curates.

Six days lost. On the 12th of May, Rabaud de Saint-Etienne, a Protestant deputy from Nîmes, and the son of the old Martyr of Cévennes, proposed a conference to bring about the union. To which the Breton Chapelier wished to have substituted “ a *notification* of the astonishment of the Third-Estate at the absence of the other orders, of the impossibility of conferring elsewhere than in a common union, and of the interest and right that every deputy had to judge of the validity of the title of all ; the States being once opened, there is no longer any deputy of order or province, but representatives of the nation ; the deputies of privilege gain by it, their functions being aggrandized.”

Rabaut's motion was carried, as being the more moderate. Conferences took place ; but they only served to embitter things. On the 27th of May, Mirabeau reproduced a motion that he had already brought forward, to attempt to detach the clergy from the nobility, and invite them to the union “ in the name of the God of peace.” The motion was one of good policy ; a number of *curés* were waiting impatiently for an opportunity to unite. This new invitation nearly carried away the whole order. With great difficulty, the prelates obtained a delay. In the evening, they ran to the castle, to the Polignac party. By means of the queen,\* they got from the king a letter in

\* Droz, ii., 189.—The testimony of M. Droz has often the weight of a contemporary authority ; he frequently transmits to us the verbal information and revelation of Malouet and other important actors of the Revolution.



which he declared "that he desired that the conferences might be resumed in presence of the keeper of the seals and a royal commission." The king thus impeded the union of the clergy with the Third, and made himself visibly the agent of the privileged classes.

This letter was a snare unworthy of royalty. If the Third Estate accepted, the king, arbiter of the conferences, could quash the question by a decree of the council, and the orders remained divided. If the Third alone refused and the other orders accepted, it bore alone the odium of the common inaction ; it alone, at that moment of misery and famine, would not take one step to succour the nation. Mirabeau, in pointing out the snare, advised the assembly to appear duped, to accept the conferences, whilst protesting by an address.

Another snare. In these conferences, Necker made an appeal to sentiment, generosity, and confidence. He advised that each order should intrust the validity of its elective returns to the others ; and, in case of difference of opinion, *the king should judge*. The clergy accepted without hesitation. If the nobility had accepted, the Third remained alone against two. Who drew it out of this danger ? The nobility themselves, mad, and running headlong to their ruin. The Polignac committee would not accept an expedient proposed by their enemy, Necker. Even before reading the king's letter, the nobility had decided in order to bar every chance of conciliation, that deliberation by orders and the *veto* of each order on the decisions of the others, were constituent principles of the monarchy. Necker's plan tempted many moderate nobles ; two new nobles of great talent, only violent and weak-headed, Cazalès and d'Eprémèsnil, embroiled the question and contrived to elude this last means of salvation,—to reject the plank which the king presented to them in their shipwreck (June 6th).

A month lost, after the delay of the three adjournments which the convocation had suffered ! One month, in open famine ! Observe, that in this long expectation, the rich kept themselves motionless, and postponed every kind of expenditure. Work had ceased. He who had but his hands, his daily labour, to supply the day, went to look for work, found none, begged, got nothing, robbed. Starving gangs overran the country ; wherever they found any resistance, they became furious,

killed, and burned. Horror spread far and near; communications ceased, and famine went on increasing. A thousand absurd stories were in circulation. They were said to be brigands paid by the court. And the court flung back the accusation on the Duke of Orleans.

The position of the Assembly was difficult. It was obliged to sit inactive, when every remedy that could be hoped for was in action. It was obliged to shut its ears, in a manner, to the painful cry of France, in order to save France herself, and found her liberty!

The clergy aggravated that cruel position, and contrived a truly Phariseean invention against the Third Estate. A prelate came into the Assembly, to weep over the poor people and the misery of the rural districts. Before the four thousand persons present at that meeting, he drew from his pocket a hideous lump of black bread: "Such," said he, "is the bread of the peasant." The clergy proposed to act, to form a commission to confer together on the question of food and the misery of the poor. A dangerous snare. Either the Assembly yielded, became active, and thus consecrated the separation of the orders, or else it declared itself insensible to public misfortunes. The responsibility of the disorder which was everywhere beginning, fell on it at once. The usual orators however remained silent on this compromising question. But some obscure deputies, MM. Populus and Robespierre,\* expressed forcibly and with talent the general sentiment. They invited the clergy to come into the *common hall* to deliberate on these public calamities by which the Assembly was no less touched than they.

This answer did not lessen the danger. How easy was it henceforth for the court, the nobles, and the priests, to turn the people? What a fine text was a proud, ambitious assembly of advocates, that had promised to save France, and let her die of misery, rather than give up any of their unjust pretensions!

The court seized this weapon with avidity, and expected to

\* Robespierre retorted happily. He said, very cleverly: "The ancient canons authorise, for the relief of the poor, to sell even the sacred vases" The *Moniteur*, incomplete and inexact, as it so often is, needs to be completed here by Etienne Dumont.—*Souvenirs*, p. 60.

destroy the Assembly. The king said to the president of the clergy, who came to submit to him the charitable proposal of his order on the question of food : " That he should see with pleasure a commission formed of the States-General that could assist him with its counsels."

Thus, the clergy were thinking of the people, and so was the king ; nothing prevented the nobility from uttering the same words. And then, the Third would be quite alone. It was about to be stated, that everybody desired the welfare of the people except the Third Estate.

### CHAPTER III.

#### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Last Summons of the Third on the 10th of June.—It assumes the name of *Communes*.—The Communes take the Title of *National Assembly* on the 17th of June.—They Assume the right of Taxation.—The King orders the Hall to be shut up.—The Assembly at the Tennis-Court (*Jeu de Paume*), June 20th, 1789.

On the 10th of June, Sieyes said, on entering the Assembly : " Let us cut the cable ; it is time." Since that day, the vessel of the Revolution, in spite of storms and calms, delayed, but never stopped, sails onwards to the future.

That great theorician, who had beforehand calculated so exactly, showed himself here truly a statesman ; he had said what ought to be done, and he did it at the right moment.

Everything has its right moment. Here, it was the 10th of June, neither sooner nor later. Sooner, the nation was not sufficiently convinced of the hard-heartedness of the privileged classes ; it required a month for them to display clearly all their ill-will. Subsequently, two things were to be feared, either that the people, driven to extremity, might abandon their freedom for a bit of bread, and the privileged finish all, by renouncing their exemption from taxes ; or else, that the nobility, uniting with the clergy, might form (as they were advised) an upper chamber. Such a chamber, which, in our own days, has no part to play but that of being a machine convenient to royalty, would, in '89, have been a power by itself : it would

have assembled together those who then possessed the half or the two-thirds of the lands in the kingdom, those who, by their agents, tenants, and innumerable servants, had so many means of influencing the rural districts. The Netherlands had just given an example of the concord of those two orders, which had led away the people, driven out the Austrians, and dispossessed the emperor.

On Wednesday, the 10th of June, 1789, Sieyes proposed to summon the clergy and nobility for the last time, to warn them that the call would be made *in an hour*, and that *default would be the sentence* for non-appearance.

This summons in the judiciary form, was an unexpected blow. The deputies of the commons were taking, towards those who contested equality with them, a superior position, somewhat like that of judges.

This was wise; for there was too much risk in waiting; but it was also bold. It has often been said, that they who had a whole people behind them, and a city like Paris, had nothing to fear; that they were the stronger party, and advanced without any danger. After the event, and everything having succeeded, the thesis may be supported. Doubtless, they who took that step felt themselves very strong; but this strength was by no means organised; the people were not military as they became at a later period. An army surrounded Versailles, partly of Germans and Swiss (nine regiments at least out of fifteen); a battery of cannon was before the Assembly. The glory of the great logician who reduced the national mind to a formula, and the glory of the Assembly that accepted the formula, was to see nothing of that, but to believe in logic, and to advance in their faith.

The court, very irresolute, could do nothing but assume a disdainful silence. Twice the king avoided receiving the president of the commons; he was out hunting, so they said, or else, he was too much afflicted at the recent death of the Dauphin. But it was known that he received every day the prelates, nobles, and *parlementaires*. They were beginning to be alarmed, and now came to offer themselves to the king. The court listened to them and then bargained and speculated on their fears. However, it was evident that the king being besieged by them, and their prisoner to a certain degree, would

belong to them entirely, and show himself more and more what he was, a partisan of privilege at the head of the privileged classes. The situation of parties became clear and easy to be defined,—privilege on one side and right on the other.

The Assembly had spoken out. It expected its proceeding would cause it to be joined by a part of the clergy. The *curés* felt they were the people, and wished to go and take their true place by the side of the people. But habits of ecclesiastical subordination, the intrigues of the prelates, their authority and menaces, with the court and the queen, on the other hand, kept them still immovable on their benches. Only three ventured, then seven,—ten in all. Great was the merriment at court about this fine conquest made by the Third Estate.

The Assembly must either perish or go on and take a second step. It was necessary for it to look boldly on the plain but terrible situation to which we alluded just now,—right opposed to privilege—the right of the nation concentrated in the Assembly. Neither was it sufficient to see that; it was necessary to show it, cause it to be promulgated, and to give to the Assembly its true name: *The National Assembly*.

In his famous pamphlet, which everybody knew by heart, Sieyes had said these remarkable words, which did not fall to the ground: “The Third alone, they will say, cannot form the States-General.—Well! so much the better; it shall compose a *National Assembly*.”

To assume this title,—thus to entitle itself the nation, and realize the revolutionary dogma laid down by Sieyes—*The Third is everything*, was too bold a step to be taken all at once. It was necessary to prepare minds for it, and march towards that goal gradually and step by step.

At first the words *National Assembly* were not uttered in the Assembly itself but at Paris, among the electors who had elected Sieyes, and were not afraid to speak his language.

On the 15th of May, M. Boissy d'Anglas, then obscure and without influence, pronounced the words, but only to set them aside and adjourn them, warning the Chamber that it ought to be on its guard against every kind of precipitation, and remain free from the least reproach of *levity*. Before the movement began, he wanted already to efface the appellation.

The Assembly finally adopted the name of *Communes*, which,

in its humble and ill-defined signification, divested it however of the petty, inappropriate, and special name of *Third Estate*. The nobility strongly protested.

On the 15th of June, Sieyes, with boldness and prudence, demanded that the Commons should assume the title of *Assembly of the known and acknowledged representatives of the French nation*. It seemed to express only a fact impossible to be contested; the deputies of the Commons had subjected their powers to a public verification, made solemnly in the great open hall and before the crowd. The two other orders had verified among themselves with closed doors. The simple word, *acknowledged* deputies, reduced the others to the name of *presumed* deputies. Could the latter prevent the others from acting? Could the absent paralyse the *present*? Sieyes reminded them that the latter *represented already the ninety-six hundredths* (at least) *of the nation*.

They knew Sieyes too well not to suspect that this proposal was a step to lead to another, bolder and more decisive. Mirabeau reproached him from the very first, "with impelling the Assembly into the career, without showing it the goal to which he wanted to urge it."

And indeed, on the second day of the battle, the light burst forth. Two deputies served as precursors to Sieyes. M. Legrand proposed that the Assembly should constitute itself a *General Assembly*, and allow itself to be stopped by nothing that might be separate from the *indivisibility of a National Assembly*. M. Galand demanded that, as the clergy and nobility were simply two corporations, and the nation one and indivisible, the Assembly should constitute itself the legitimate and active *Assembly of the representatives of the French nation*. Sieyes then laid aside every obscurity and circumlocution, and proposed the title of *National Assembly*.

Since the sitting of the 10th, Mirabeau had seen Sieyes advancing under ground, and was frightened. That march led straight to a point, where it found itself face to face with royalty and the aristocracy. Would it halt out of respect for that worm-eaten idol? It did not appear likely. Now, in spite of the cruel discipline by which tyranny formed Mirabeau for liberty, we must say that the famous tribune was an aristocrat by taste and manners, and a royalist in heart • he was so



in fact by birth and blood. Two motives, one grand, and the other base, likewise impelled him. Surrounded by greedy women, he wanted money ; and monarchy appeared to him with open lavish hands, squandering gold and favours. That royalty had been cruel and hard-hearted to him ; but even that now interested him the more : he would have considered it noble to save a king who had so often signed the order for his imprisonment. Such was this poor great man, so magnanimous and generous, that one would wish to be able to attribute his vices to his deplorable acquaintances, and the paternal barbarity which excluded him from his family. His father persecuted him throughout his life, and yet he requested, with his dying breath, to be buried by his side.\*

On the 10th, when Sieyes proposed to pronounce *default* for non-appearance, Mirabeau seconded that severe proposition, and spoke with firmness and energy. But, in the evening seeing the peril, he took upon himself to go and see his enemy, Necker ;† he wished to enlighten him on the situation of things, and offer royalty the succour of his powerful oratory. Although ill-received and offended, he did not the less undertake to block up the road against Sieyes, and he, the tribune, raised but yesterday by the Revolution, and who had no power but in her, even he wanted to throw himself before her, and imagined he could stop her.

Any other would have perished at once, without ever being able to extricate himself. That he should have fallen more than once into unpopularity, and yet been able to regain his footing, is what gives a very grand idea of the power of eloquence upon this nation, sensitive beyond all others, to the genius of oratory.

What could be more difficult than Mirabeau's thesis ? In presence of that excited and transported multitude, before a people exalted above themselves by the grandeur of the crisis, he endeavoured to establish " that the people were not interested in such discussions ; that all they asked for was to pay only what they could, and to bear their misery peaceably."

After these base, afflicting, discouraging words, false more-

\* *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, édité par M. Lucas de Montigny, t. viii., liv. x.

† Compare the different, but reconcileable, versions of E. Dumont and Droz, (who follow the oral testimony of Malouet).



over in terms, he ventured to put the question of principle: "Who convoked you? The king. Do your mandates and written resolutions authorize you to declare yourselves the Assembly only of the known and acknowledged representatives? and if the king refuses you his sanction? The consequence is evident. You will have pillage and butcheries: you will not have even the execrable honour of a civil war."

What title then was it necessary to take?

Mounier and the imitators of the English government proposed: Representatives of the *Major part* of the Nation, in the absence of the Minor part. That divided the nation into two parts, and led to the establishment of two Chambers.

Mirabeau preferred the formula: Representatives of the French *People*. That word, said he, was elastic,—might mean little or much.

This was precisely the reproach brought against him by two eminent legists, Target (of Paris), and Thouret (of Rouen). They asked him whether *people* meant *plebs* or *populus*. The equivocation was laid bare. The king, the clergy, and the nobility would doubtless have interpreted *people* in the sense of *plebs*, or inferior people,—a simple *part* of the nation.

Many had not perceived the equivocation, nor how much ground it would have caused the Assembly to lose. But they all understood it, when Malouet, Necker's friend, accepted the word *people*.

The fear which Mirabeau attempted to inspire with the royal veto, excited only indignation. Camus, the Jansenist, one of the firmest characters in the Assembly, replied in these strong terms: "We are what we are. Can the *veto* prevent truth from being one and immutable? Can the royal sanction change the order of things and alter their nature?"

Mirabeau, irritated by the contradiction, and losing all prudence, became so angry as to say: "I believe the king's *veto* so necessary, that I would rather live at Constantinople than in France if he had it not. Yes, I declare I know nothing more terrible than the sovereign aristocracy of six hundred persons, who might to-morrow render themselves irrevocable, hereditary the day after, and end, like the aristocracies of every country in the world, by invading everything."

Thus, of two evils, one possible, the other present, Mirabeau

preferred the one present and certain. In the hypothesis that this Assembly might one day wish to perpetuate itself and become an hereditary tyrant, he armed, with the tyrannical power of preventing every reform, that incorrigible court which it was expedient to reform. *The king! the king!* Why should they ever abuse that old religion? Who did not know that since Louis XIV. there had been no king. The war was between two republics: one, sitting in the Assembly, composed of the master minds of the age, the best citizens, was France herself; the other, the republic of abuses, held its council with the old cabinets of such as Dubois, Pompadour, and Du Barry, in the house of Diana de Polignac.

Mirabeau's speech was received with thunders of indignation and a torrent of imprecations and abuse. The eloquent rhetoric with which he refuted what nobody had said (that the word *people* is vile) was unable to dupe his auditory.

It was nine in the evening. The discussion was closed in order to take the votes. The singular precision with which the question had been brought to bear on royalty itself, caused some apprehension that the court might do the only thing that it had to do to prevent the people from being king on the morrow; it possessed brute force,—an army round Versailles, which it might employ to carry off the principal deputies, dissolve the states, and, if Paris stirred, famish Paris. This bold crime was its last cast, and people believed that it was going to be played. They wished to prevent it by constituting the Assembly that very night. This was the opinion of more than four hundred deputies; a hundred, at most, were against it. That small majority precluded, all night, by shouts and violence, every possibility of calling over the names. But this shameful sight of a majority being tyrannized over, and the Assembly endangered by a delay, together with the idea that, one moment or other, the work of liberty, the salvation of the future, might be annihilated,—all contributed to transport with fury the crowd that filled the tribunes; a man rushed forward and seized Malouet, the principal leader of the obstinate shouters, by the collar.\*

\* The principal witness, Bailly, does not give this circumstance, which M. Droz alone relates, doubtless on the authority of Malouet.

The man escaped. The shouts continued. In presence of that tumult, says Bailly, who presided, the assembly remained firm and worthy; as patient as strong, it waited in silence till that turbulent band had exhausted itself with shouting. An hour after midnight, the deputies being less numerous, voting was formally postponed till the morrow.

On the following morning, at the moment of voting, the president was informed that he was summoned to the *chancellerie* to receive a letter from the king. This letter, in which he reminded them that they could do nothing without the concurrence of the three orders, would have arrived just at the right moment to furnish a text for the hundred opponents, to give rise to long speeches, and unsettle and disaffect many weak minds. The Assembly, with royal gravity, adjourned the king's letter, and forbade its president to leave the hall before the end of the meeting. It wanted to vote and voted.

The different motions might be reduced to three, or rather to two:—

1st. That of Sieyes—*National Assembly*.

2ndly. That of Mounier—*Assembly of the Representatives of the Major part of the Nation*, in the absence of the *Minor* part. The equivocal formula of Mirabeau was equivalent to Mounier's, as the word *people* could be taken in a limited sense, and as the *major part of the nation*.

Mounier had the apparent advantage of a judicial literalness, an arithmetical exactness, but was fundamentally contrary to justice. It brought into symmetrical opposition, and compared, as on a level, two things of an enormously different value. The Assembly represented the nation, minus the privileged; that is to say, 96 or 98 hundredths to 4 hundredths (according to Sieyes), or 2 hundredths (according to Necker). Why should such an enormous importance be given to these 2 or 4 hundredths? Certainly not for the moral power they contained; they no longer had any. It was, in reality, because all the large properties of the kingdom, the two-thirds of the lands, were in their possession. Mounier was the advocate of the landed property against the population,—of the land against man:—a feudal, English, and materialist point of view. Sieyes had given the true French formula.

With Mounier's arithmetic and unjust justness, and with

Mirabeau's equivocation, the nation remained *a class*, and the fixed property—the land—constituted also *a class* in face of the nation. We remained in the injustice of antiquity; the Middle Ages was perpetuated—the barbarous system by which the ground was reckoned more precious than man; and the land, manure, and ashes, were the liege lords of the mind.

Sieyes, being put to the vote at once, had near five hundred votes for him, and not one hundred against him.\* Therefore the Assembly was proclaimed *National Assembly*. Many cried, *Vive le Roi!*

Two interruptions again intervened, as if to stop the Assembly,—one from the nobility, who sent for a mere pretext; the other from certain deputies, who wanted to have a president and a regular *bureau* created before everything else. The Assembly proceeded immediately to the solemnity of the oath. In presence of a multitude of four thousand deeply affected spectators, the six hundred deputies, standing in profound silence, with up-raised hands and contemplating the calm, honest countenance of their president, listened to him whilst reading the formula, and exclaimed: “We swear.” A universal sentiment of respect and religion filled every heart.

The Assembly was founded; it existed; it lacked but strength, the certainty of living. It secured this by asserting the right of taxation. It declared that the impost, *till then illegal*, should be collected *provisionally* “till the day of the separation of the present Assembly.” This was, with one blow, condemning all the past and seizing upon the future.

It adopted openly the question of honour, the public debt, and guaranteed it.

And all these royal acts were in royal language, in the very formulæ which the king alone had hitherto taken: “The Assembly *intends and deerees.*”

Finally, it evinced much concern about public subsistences. The administrative power having declined as much as the others, the legislature, the only authority then respected, was forced to interfere. It demanded, moreover, for its committee of subsistence, what the king himself had offered to the

\* Four hundred and ninety-one votes against ninety. Mirabeau durst not vote either for or against, and remained at home.

deputation of the clergy,—a communication of the information that would throw a light upon this matter. But what he had then offered, he was no longer willing to grant.

The most surprised of all was Necker ; he had, in his simplicity, believed he could lead the world ; and the world was going on without him. He had ever regarded the young Assembly as his daughter—his pupil ; he warranted the king that it would be docile and well-behaved ; yet, behold, all on a sudden, without consulting its tutor, it went alone, advanced and climbed over the old barriers without deigning even to look at them. When thus motionless with astonishment, Necker received two counsels, one from a royalist, the other from a republican, and both came to the same thing. The royalist was the intendant Bertrand de Molleville,—an impassioned and narrow-minded intendant of the *ancien régime* ; the republican was Durovray, one of those democrats whom the king had driven from Geneva in 1782.

It is necessary to know who this foreigner was, who, in so serious a crisis, took so great an interest in France, and ventured to give advice. Durovray, settled in England, pensioned by the English, and grown English in heart and maxims, was, a little later, a chief of emigrants. Meanwhile, he formed a part of a little Genevese *coterie* which, unfortunately for us, was circumventing Mirabeau. England seemed to be surrounding the principal organ of French liberty.\* Unfavourable towards the English till then, the great man had allowed himself to be taken by those ex-republicans,—the self-termed martyrs of liberty. The Durovrays, the Dumonts, and other indefatigable writers of mediocrity, were ever ready to assist his idleness. He was already an invalid, and going the very way to render himself worse and worse. His nights destroyed his days. In the morning he remembered the Assembly and

\* These Genevese were not precisely agents of England. But the pensions they received from her,—the monstrous present of more than a million (of francs) that she made them to found an Irish Geneva (which remained on paper),—all that imposed on them the obligation to serve the English. Moreover, they became two parties. Yvernois became English and our most cruel enemy ; Clavière alone was French. What shall we say of Etienne Dumont, who pretends that those people, with their leaden pens, wrote all Mirabeau's orations ? His *Souvenirs* bear witness to a base ingratitude towards the man of genius who honoured him with his friendship.

business, and collected his thoughts ; he had there, ready at hand, the English policy, sketched by the Genevese ; he received it with his eyes shut, and embellished it with his talent. Such was his readiness and his lack of preparation, that, at the tribune, even his admirable language was occasionally only a translation of the notes which these Genevese handed to him from time to time.

Durovray, who was not in communication with Necker, made himself his officious counsellor in this serious crisis.

Like Bertrand de Molleville, his opinion was that the king should *annul the decree* of the Assembly, deprive it of its name of *National Assembly*, command the union of the three orders, declare himself the *Provisional Legislator of France*, and do, *by royal authority*, what the Commons had done without it. Bertrand believed justly, that, after this *coup d'état*, the Assembly could but dissolve. Durovray pretended that the Assembly, crushed and humiliated under the royal prerogative, would accept its petty part, as a machine to make laws.\*

On the evening of the 17th, the heads of the clergy, Cardinal de Larochehoucauld, and the Archbishop of Paris, had hastened to Marly, and implored the king and the queen. On the 19th, vain disputes in the Chamber of the nobility ; Orleans proposed to join the Third, and Montesquieu to unite with the clergy. But there was no longer any order of the clergy. The very same day, the *curés* had transferred the majority of their order to form a union with the Third, and thus divided the order into two. The cardinal and the archbishop return the same evening to Marly, and fall at the feet of the king : " Religion is ruined ! " Next, come the Parliament people : " The monarchy is lost, unless the States be dissolved."

A dangerous advice, and already impossible to follow. The flood was rising higher every hour. Versailles and Paris were in commotion. Necker had persuaded two or three of the

\* Compare the two plans in Bertrand's *Mémoires* and Dumont's *Souvenirs*. The latter confesses that the Genevese had taken good care not to confide their fine project to Mirabeau ; he was not informed of it till after the event, and then said with much good sense : " This is the way kings are led to the scaffold."



ministers, and even the king, that his project was the only means of salvation. That project had been read over again in a last and definitive council on Friday evening, the 19th; everything was finished and agreed: "The portfolios were already being shut up," says Necker, "when one of the royal servants suddenly entered; he whispered to the king; and His Majesty immediately arose, commanding his ministers to remain in their places. M. de Montmorin, sitting by my side, said to me: 'We have effected nothing; the queen alone could have ventured to interrupt the Council of State; the princes, apparently, have circumvented her.'"

Everything was stopped: this might have been foreseen; it was, doubtless, for this that the king had been brought to Marly, away from Versailles and the people; and, alone with the queen, more affectionate and liable to be influenced by her, in their common affliction for the death of their child. A fine opportunity, an excellent chance for the suggestions of the priests! Was not the Dauphin's death a severe judgment of Providence, when the king was yielding to the dangerous innovations of a Protestant minister?

The king, still undecided, but already almost overcome, was contented to command (in order to prevent the clergy from uniting with the Third Estate) that the hall should be shut on the morrow, (Saturday June 20th); the pretext was the preparations necessary for a royal meeting to be held on the Monday.

All this was settled in the night, and placarded in Versailles at six in the morning. The president of the National Assembly learned, by mere chance, that it could not be held. It was past seven when he received a letter, not from the king (as was natural, the king being accustomed to write with his own hand to the president of the Parliament), but simply a notice from young Brézé, the master of the ceremonies. It was not to the president, to M. Bailly, at his lodgings, that such a notice ought to have been given, but to the Assembly itself. Bailly had no power to act of himself. At eight o'clock, the hour appointed the night before, he repaired to the door of the hall with a great number of deputies. Being stopped by the sentinels, he protested against the hindrance, and declared the meeting convened. Several young members made a show of

breaking open the door ; the officer commanded his soldiers to arm, thus announcing that his orders contained no reservation for inviolability.

Behold our new kings, put out, kept out of doors, like unruly scholars. Behold them wandering about in the rain, among the people, on the Paris avenue. All agree about the necessity of holding the meeting and of assembling. Some shout, Let us go to the Place d'Armes ! Others, to Marly ! Another, to Paris ! This last was an extreme measure ; it was firing the powder-magazine.

The deputy Guillotin made a less hazardous motion, to repair to Old Versailles, and take up their quarters in the Tennis-court (*Jeu-de-Paume*),—a miserable, ugly, poor, and unfurnished building, but the better on that account. The Assembly also was poor, and represented the people, on that day, so much the better. They remained standing all day long, having scarcely a wooden bench. It was like the manger of the new religion,—its stable of Bethlehem !

One of those intrepid *curés* who had decided the union of the clergy—the illustrious Grégoire—long after, when the Empire had so cruelly effaced every trace of the Revolution, its parent, used often to go near Versailles to visit the ruins of Port-Royal ; one day (doubtless on his return), he entered the *Jeu-de-Paume*\*—the one in ruins, the other abandoned—tears flowed from the eyes of that firm man, who had never shown any weakness. Two religions to weep for ! this was too much for the heart of man.

We too revisited, in 1846, that cradle of Liberty, that place whose echo repeated her first words, that received, and still preserves her memorable oath. But what could we say to it ? What news could we give it of the world that it brought forth ? Oh ! time has not flown quickly ; generations have succeeded one another ; but the work has not progressed. When we stepped upon its venerable pavement, we felt ashamed in our heart of what we are,—of the little we have done. We felt we were unworthy, and quitted that sacred place.

\* *Mémoires de Grégoire*, i., p. 330.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OATH AT THE JEU-DE-PAUME.

Oath at the *Jeu-de-Paume*, June 20th, 1789.—The Assembly wandering.—*A Coup d'État*; Necker's Project; the King's Declaration, June 23rd, 1789; the Assembly Refuses to Separate.—The King entreats Necker to remain, but does not revoke his Declaration.

BEHOLD them now in the Tennis-court, assembled in spite of the king. But what are they going to do?

Let us not forget that at that period the whole Assembly was royalist, without excepting a single member.\*

Let us not forget that on the 17th, when it assumed the title of National Assembly, it shouted *Vive le Roi!* And when it attributed to itself the right of voting the impost, declaring illegal the impost collected till then, the opposition members had left the Assembly, unwilling to consecrate, by their presence, this infringement of the royal authority.†

The king, that shadow of the past, that ancient superstition, so powerful in the hall of the States-General, grew pale in the Tennis-court. The miserable building, entirely modern, bare, and unfurnished, has not a single corner where the dreams of the past can yet find shelter. Let, therefore, the pure spirit of Reason and Justice, that king of the future, reign here!

That day there was no longer any opponent;‡ the Assembly was one, in thought and heart. It was one of the moderate party, Mounier of Grenoble, who proposed to the Assembly the celebrated declaration: That wherever it might be forced to unite, there was ever the National Assembly; that *nothing could prevent it* from continuing its deliberations. And, till the com-

\* See further, the 22nd of July, a note relating to Robespierre.

† As appears to me by comparing the numbers of the votes. The illegality of the impost not consented to, &c., was voted *unanimously* by the four hundred and twenty-six deputies alone remaining in the hall.—*Archives du Royaume, Procès-verbaux MSS. de l'Assemblée Nationale.*

‡ There was only one. The ninety opponents of the 17th of June joined the majority.

pletion and establishment of the constitution, it took *an oath never to separate*.

Bailly was the first who took the oath ; and he pronounced it so loud and distinctly that the whole multitude of people crowding without could hear, and applauded in the excess of their enthusiasm. Shouts of *Vive le Roi !* arose from the Assembly and from the people. It was the shout of ancient France, in her extreme transports, and it was now added to the oath of resistance.\*

In 1792, Mounier, then an emigrant, alone in a foreign land, questions and asks himself whether his motion of the 20th of June was founded on right ; whether his loyalty as a royalist was consistent with his duty as a citizen. And even there, in emigration, and among all the prejudices of hatred and exile, he replies, Yes !

"Yes," says he, "the oath was just ; they wanted the dissolution, and it would have taken place without the oath ; the court, freed from the States, would never have convoked them ; it would have been necessary to renounce the founding of that constitution claimed unanimously in the old writings of France." That is what a royalist, the most moderate of the moderate, a jurist accustomed to find moral decisions in positive texts, pronounces on the primordial act of our Revolution.

What were they doing all this time at Marly ? On Saturday and Sunday, Necker was contending with the Parliament people, to whom the king had abandoned him, and who, with the coolness sometimes possessed by madmen, were overthrowing his project, abridging it of what might have caused it to pass, and took from it its bastard character, in order to convert it into a simple but brutal *coup d'état*, in the manner of Louis XV., a simple *lit de justice*, as the Parliament had suffered so many times. The discussion lasted till the evening. It was not till midnight that the president, then in bed, was informed that the royal meeting could not take place in the morning,—that it was postponed till Tuesday.

\* The Assembly went no further. It rejected the strong, but true motion of Chapelier, who was bold enough to speak out plainly what was in the minds of all. He proposed an address : "To inform His Majesty that the enemies of the country were besieging the throne, and that their counsels tended to *place the monarch at the head of a PARTY*."

The nobility had come to Marly on the Sunday in great numbers and with much turbulence. They had again showed to the king, in an address, that the question now concerned him much more than the nobility. The court was animated with a chivalrous daring; these swordsmen seemed to wait only for a signal to resist the champions of the pen. The Count D'Artois, amid these bravadoes, became so intoxicated with insolence, as to send word to the Tennis-court that he would play on the morrow.

On the Monday morning, therefore, the Assembly found itself once more in the open streets of Versailles, wandering about, without house or home. Fine amusement for the court! The master of the hall was afraid; he feared the princes. The Assembly does not succeed better at the door of the Récollets where it next knocks; the monks dare not compromise themselves. Who then are these vagrants, this dangerous band, before whom every door is shut? Nothing less than the Nation itself.

But why not deliberate in the open air? What more noble canopy than the sky? But on that day the majority of the clergy wish to come and sit with the commons. Where are they to receive them? Luckily, the hundred and thirty-four *curés*, with a few prelates at their head, had already taken up their quarters, in the morning, in the church of Saint-Louis. The Assembly was introduced there into the nave; and the ecclesiastics, at first assembled in the choir, then came forth, and took their places among its members. A grand moment, and one of sincere joy! "The temple of religion," says an orator, with emotion, "became the temple of the native land!"

On that very day, Monday the 22nd, Necker was still contending, but in vain. His project, fatal to liberty because he preserved in it a shadow of moderation, had to give way to another more liberal and better calculated to place things in their proper light. Necker was now nothing more than a guilty mediator between good and evil, preserving a semblance of equilibrium between the just and the unjust,—a courtier, at the same time, of the people and the enemies of the people. At the last council held on Monday at Versailles, the princes, who were invited to it, did liberty the essential service of

removing this equivocal mediator, who prevented reason and unreasonableness from seeing each other plainly face to face.

Before the sitting begins, I wish to examine both projects,—Necker's and the court's. In what concerns the former, I will believe none but Necker himself.

## NECKER'S PROJECT.

In his book of 1796, written at a time of decided reaction, Necker avows to us confidentially what his project was ; he shows that that project was, *bold, very bold*—in favour of the privileged. This confession is rather painful for him, and he makes it by an effort. “The defect of my project was its being too bold ; I risked all that it was possible for me to risk. Explain yourself. I will, and I ought. Deign to listen to me.”\*

He is speaking to the emigrants, to whom this apology is addressed. A vain undertaking ! How will they ever forgive him for having called the people to political life, and made five millions of electors ?

1st. Those necessary, inevitable reforms, which the court had so long refused, and which they accepted only by force, he promulgated by the king. He, who knew, to his cost, that the king was the puppet of the queen and the court, a mere cipher, nothing more,—even he became a party for the continuing of that sad comedy.

Liberty, that sacred right which exists of itself, he made a present from the king, *a granted charter*, as was the charter of the invasion in 1814. But it required thirty years of war, and all Europe at Paris, for France to accept that constitution of falsehood.

2ndly. No legislative unity,—*two Chambers*, at least. This was like a timid advice to France to become English ; in which there were two advantages : to strengthen the privileged, priests and nobles, henceforth concentrated in one upper Chamber ; next, to make it easier for the king to amuse the people, to refuse by the upper Chamber, instead of refusing by himself, and of having (as we see to-day) two vetos for one.

3rdly. The king was to permit the three orders to deliberate in common on *general* affairs ; but as to *privileges* of personal distinction, of honour, and as to *rights attached to fiefs*, no dis-

\* *Œuvres de Necker*, vi., p. 191.



cussion in common. Now this was precisely what France considered as the superlatively *general* business. Who then dared to see a special business in the question of honour?

4thly. These crippled States-General, now united, now separated into three orders, at one time active, at another supine, through their triple movement, Necker balances, shackles, and neutralises still more, by *provincial States*, thus augmenting division, when France is thirsting for unity.

5thly. That is what he gives, and as soon as given, he takes away again. This fine legislative machine is never to be seen at work by anybody; he grudges us the sight of it; it is to work with closed doors: *no publicity of its sittings*. The law is thus to be made, far from daylight, in the dark, as one would make a plot against the law.

6thly.—The law? What does this word mean, without personal liberty? Who can act, elect, or vote freely, when nobody is sure of sleeping at home? This first condition of social life, anterior to, and indispensable for political action, is not yet secured by Necker. The king is to invite the Assembly *to seek the means that might permit* the abolition of the *lettres-de-cachet*. Meanwhile, he keeps them together with the arbitrary power of kidnapping, the state-prisons, and the Bastille.

Such is the extreme concession which ancient royalty makes, in its most favourable moment, and urged on by a popular minister. Moreover, it cannot go even thus far. The nominal king promises; the real king, the court—laughs at the promise. Let them die in their sin!

#### THE KING'S DECLARATION (JUNE 23, 1789).

The plan of the court is worth more than the bastard plan of Necker; at least it is plainer to understand. Whatever is bad in Necker is precious preserved, nay richly augmented.

This act, which may be called the testament of despotism, is divided into two parts: 1st. The prohibition of securities: under this head, Declaration concerning the *present* holding of the States. 2ndly. The reforms and benefits as they say,\*

\* The style on a par with the matter; now bombastic, now flat, and strongly savouring of false valour: "Never did a king do so much!" Towards the end is a phrase of admirable impudence and awkwardness (Necker claims it accordingly, tome ix., p. 196): "Reflect, gentlemen, that none of your projects can have the force of law without my special approbation."

Declaration of the king's *intentions*, of his wishes and desires for future contingencies. The evil is sure, and the good possible. Let us see the detail.

I. The king annihilates the will of five millions of electors, declaring that their demands are only information.

The king annihilates the decisions of the deputies of the Third Estate, declaring them "null, illegal, unconstitutional."

The king will have the three orders remain distinct, that one may be able to shackle the others (that two hundredths of the nation may weigh as much as the whole nation).

*If they wish* to meet, he permits it, but *only for this time*, and also only for *general* business; in this general business is included neither the rights of the three orders, the constitution of the future States, the feudal and seignorial properties, nor the privileges of money or of honour. All the *ancien régime* is thus found to be an exception.

All this was the work of the court. Here is, according to every appearance, the king's manifesto, the one he fondly cherished, and wrote himself. The order of the clergy shall have a special *veto* (against the nobility and the Third Estate) for everything relating to religion, the discipline and government of the secular and *regular* orders. Thus, not one monk less; no reform to be made. And all those convents, every day more odious and useless, and unable any longer to be recruited, the clergy wanted to maintain. The nobility was furious. It lost its dearest hope. It had reckoned that, one day or other, that prey would fall into its hands; at the very least, it hoped that, if the king and the people pressed it too much to make some sacrifice, it would generously make that of the clergy.

Veto on veto. For what purpose? Here we have a refinement of precautions, far more sure to render every result impossible. In the common deliberations of the three orders, it is sufficient that the *two-thirds of one order* protest against the deliberation, for the decision to be referred to the king. Nay more, the thing being decided, it is *sufficient that a hundred members* protest for the decision to be referred to the king. That is to say, that the words assembly, deliberation, and decision, are only a mystification, a farce. And who could play it without laughing?

II. Now come the BENEFITS : publicity for finance, voting of taxes, regulation of the expenditure for which *the States will indicate the means*, and his Majesty “ will adopt them, *if they be compatible with the kingly dignity*, and the despatch of the public service.”

Second benefit : The king will sanction the equality of taxation, *when the clergy and the nobility shall be willing to renounce their pecuniary privileges.*

Third benefit : Properties shall be respected, *especially tithes, feudal rights, and duties.*

Fourth benefit : Individual liberty ? No. The king invites the States to *seek for and to propose* to him means for *reconciling* the abolition of the *lettres-de-cachet*, with the precautions *necessary* either for protecting the honour of families, or for repressing the commencement of sedition, &c.

Fifth : Liberty of the press ? No. The States shall seek the means of *reconciling* the liberty of the press with *the respect due to religion*, the morals, and the honour of the citizens.

Sixth : Admission to every employment ? No. Refused *expressly for the army*. The king declares, *in the most decided manner*, that he will preserve entire, and without the slightest alteration, *the institution of the army*. That is to say, that the plebeian shall never attain any grade, &c. Thus does the idiotic legislator subject everything to violence, force, and the sword : and this is the very moment he chooses to break his own. Let him now call soldiers, surround the assembly with them, and urge them towards Paris ; they are so many defenders that he gives to the Revolution.

On the eve of the grand day, three deputies of the nobility, MM. d'Aiguillon, de Menou, and de Montmorency, came at midnight to inform the president of the results of the last council, held the same evening at Versailles : “ M. Necker will not countenance, by his presence, a project contrary to his own ; he will not come to the meeting ; and will doubtless depart.” The meeting opened at ten o'clock ; and Bailly was able to tell the deputies, and the latter many others, the grand secret of the day. Opinions might have been divided and duped, had the popular minister been seen sitting beside the king ; he being absent, the king remained discovered, and forsaken by public opinion. The court had hoped to play their

game at Necker's expense, and to be sheltered by him ; they have never forgiven him for not having allowed himself to be abused and dishonoured by them.

What proves that everything was known is, that on his very exit from the castle, the king found the crowd sullenly silent.\* The affair had got abroad, and the grand scene, so highly wrought, had not the least effect.

The miserable petty spirit of insolence which swayed the court, had suggested the idea of causing the two superior orders to enter in front, by the grand entrance, and the commons behind, and to keep them under a shed, half in the rain. The Third Estate, thus humbled, wet and dirty, was to have entered crest-fallen, to receive its lesson.

Nobody to introduce them ; the door shut ; and the guard within. Mirabeau to the president : " Sir, conduct the nation into the presence of the king ! " The president knocks at the door. The body-guards from within : " Presently." The president : " Gentlemen, where is then the master of the ceremonies ? " The body-guards : " We know nothing about it." The deputies : " Well then, let us go ; come away ! " At last the president succeeds in bringing forth the captain of the guards, who goes in quest of Brézé.

The deputies, filing in one by one, find, in the hall, the clergy and the nobility, who, already in their places, and holding the meeting, seem to be awaiting them, like judges. In other respects, the hall was empty. Nothing could be more desolate than that hall, from which the people were excluded.

The king read, with his usual plainness of manner, the speech composed for him,—that despotic language so strange from his lips. He perceived but little its provoking violence, for he appeared surprised at the aspect of the Assembly. The nobles having applauded the article consecrating feudal rights, loud distinct voices were heard to utter : " Silence there ! "

The king, after a moment's pause and astonishment, concluded with a grave, intolerable sentence, which flung down the gauntlet to the Assembly, and began the war : " If you abandon me in so excellent an enterprise, I will, alone, effect

\* Dumont (an eye-witness), p. 91.

the welfare of my people ; *alone, I shall consider myself as their true representative !*"

And at the end : "*I order you, gentlemen, to disperse immediately, and to repair to-morrow morning to the chambers appropriated to your order, there to resume your sitting.*"

The king departed, followed by the nobility and the clergy. The commons remained seated, calm, and silent.\* The master of the ceremonies then entered, and said to the president in a low tone : " Sir, you heard the king's order !" He replied : " The Assembly adjourned after the royal meeting ; I cannot dismiss it till it has deliberated." Then turning towards his colleagues near him : " It seems to me that the assembled nation cannot receive any orders."

That sentence was admirably taken up by Mirabeau, who addressed it to the master of the ceremonies. With his powerful and imposing voice, and with terrible dignity, he hurled back these words : " We have heard the intentions suggested to the king ; and you, sir, who can never be his organ to the National Assembly, you, who have here neither place, voice, nor right to speak, you are not a man to remind us of his discourse. Go and tell those who send you, that we are here by the will of the people, and are to be driven hence only by the power of bayonets."†

Brézé was disconcerted, thunderstruck ; he felt the power of that new royalty, and, rendering to the one what etiquette commanded for the other, he retired walking backwards, as was the custom before the king.‡

The court had imagined another way to disperse the commons,—a brutal means formerly employed with success in the

\* There was neither hesitation, nor consternation, notwithstanding what Dumont says, who was not there. The ardent, like Grégoire (*Mém.*, i., 381), and the moderate, like Malouet, were perfectly agreed. The latter says, on this head, these fine and simple words : " We had no other course to take. We owed France a constitution."—Malouet, *Compte-rendu à mes Con-mettants*.

† This version is the only one likely. Mirabeau was a royalist ; he would never have said : " *Go and tell your master,*" nor the other words that have been added.

‡ Related by M. Frochot, an eye-witness, to the son of Mirabeau. (*Mém.*, vi., p. 39). That family has thought proper to contest a few details of this well-known scene, forty-four years after the event.

States-General,—merely to have the hall dismantled, to demolish the amphitheatre and the king's estrade. Workmen accordingly enter ! but, at one word from the president, they stop, lay down their tools, contemplate with admiration the calm majesty of the Assembly, and become attentive and respectful auditors.

A deputy proposed to discuss the king's resolutions on the morrow. He was not listened to. Camus laid down forcibly, and it was declared : " That the sitting was but a ministerial act, and that the Assembly persisted in its decrees." Barnave, the young member for Dauphiny : " You have declared what you are ; you need no sanction." Glezen, the Breton : " How now ! does the sovereign speak as a master, when he ought to consult !" Petion, Buzot, Garat, Grégoire, spoke with equal energy ; and Sieyès, with simplicity : " Gentlemen, you are to-day what you were yesterday."

The Assembly next declared, on Mirabeau's proposal, that its members were inviolable ; that whoever laid hands on a deputy was a traitor, infamous, and worthy of death.

This decree was not useless. The body-guards had formed in a line in front of the hall. It was expected that sixty deputies would be kidnapped in the night.

The nobility, headed by their president, went straightway to thank their protector, the Count d'Artois, and afterwards to Monsieur, who was prudent and took care not to be at home. Many of them went to see the queen, who, triumphant and smiling, leading her daughter and carrying the dauphin, said to them : " I intrust him to the nobility."

The king was far from sharing their joy. The silence of the people, so new to him, had overwhelmed him. When Brézé, who came and informed him that the deputies of the Third Estate remained sitting, asked for orders, he walked about for a few minutes, and said at last, in the tone of one tired to death : " Very well ; leave them alone."

The king spoke wisely. The moment was fraught with danger. One step more and Paris marched against Versailles. Versailles was already in commotion. Behold five or six thousand men advancing towards the castle. The queen sees with terror that strange and novel court, which, in a moment, fills the gardens, the terraces, and even the apartments. She



begs, she entreats the king to undo what she has done, to recall Necker. His return did not take long; he was there, near at hand, convinced, as usual, that nothing could ever go on without him. Louis XVI. said to him good-naturedly: "For my part I am not at all tenacious of that declaration."

Necker required no more, and made no condition. His vanity once satisfied, his delight in hearing everybody shout *Necker!* deprived him of every other thought. He went out, overjoyed, into the great court of the castle, and to comfort the multitude, passed in the midst of them. There a few silly persons fell on their knees and kissed his hands. He, much affected, said: "Yes, my children,—yes, my children,—I remain; be comforted." He burst into tears, and then shut himself up in his cabinet.

The poor tool of the court remained without exacting anything; he remained to shield the cabal with his name, to serve them as an advertisement, and reassure them against the people; he restored courage to those worthies, and gave them the time to summon more troops.

## CHAPTER V.

### MOVEMENT OF PARIS.

Assembly of the Electors, June 25th.—Insurrection of the French Guards.—Agitation of the Palais Royal.—Intrigues of the Orleans party.—The King commands the junction of the Orders, June 27th.—The people deliver the French Guards, June 30th.—The Court prepares for War.—Paris demands permission to arm.—Necker dismissed, July 11th, 1789.

THE situation of things was strange,—evidently temporary.

The Assembly had not obeyed. But the king had not revoked anything.

The king had recalled Necker; but he kept the Assembly like a prisoner among his troops; he had excluded the public from the sitting; the grand entrance remained shut; the Assembly entered by the small one, and debated with closed doors.

The Assembly protested feebly and but slightly. The resistance, on the 23rd, seemed to have exhausted its strength.

Paris did not imitate its weakness.

It was not content to see its deputies making laws in prison.

On the 24th the ferment was terrible.

On the 25th it burst out in three different ways at once ; by the electors, by the crowd, and by the soldiery.

The seat of the Revolution fixes itself at Paris.

The electors had agreed to meet again after the elections, in order to complete their instructions to the deputies whom they had elected. Though the ministry refused its permission,\* the *coup d'état*, on the 23rd, urged them on ; they had likewise their *coup d'état*, and assembled, of their own accord, on the 25th, in the Rue Dauphine. A wretched assembly-room, occupied at that moment by a wedding-party, which made room for them, received, at first, the Assembly of the electors of Paris. This was *their* Tennis-court. There Paris, through their medium, made an engagement to support the National Assembly. One of them, Thuriot, advised them to go to the Hotel-de-Ville, into the great hall of Saint-Jean, which nobody durst refuse them.

These electors were mostly rich men, citizens of note ; the aristocracy was numerous in this body ; but among them were, also, men of over-excited minds. First, two men, fervent *révolutionnaires*, with a singular tendency to mysticism ; one was the *abbé* Fauchet, eloquent and intrepid ; the other, his friend Bonneville, (the translator of Shakespeare). Both, in the thirteenth century, would have caused themselves, most certainly, to be burnt as heretics. In the nineteenth they were as forward as any, or rather the first, to propose resistance ; which was scarcely to be expected from the bourgeois assembly of the electors.† On the 6th of June, Bonneville proposed that Paris should be armed, and was the first to cry, "To arms."‡

\* Compare the *Mémoires de Bailly* with the *Procès-verbal des Electeurs*, drawn up by *Bailly et Duveyrier*.

† Yet, nowhere had more reliance been placed on the weakness of the people. The well-known gentleness of Parisian manners, the multitude of government people, and financiers, who could but lose in a rebellion, the crowds of those who lived on abuses, had altogether created a belief, before the elections that Paris would prove very citizen-like, easy, and timid. See *Bailly*, pp. 16, 150.

‡ Dussaulx, *Œuvre des Sept Jours*. p. 271, (ed. 1822).

Fauchet, Bonneville, Bertolio, and Carra, a violent journalist, made these bold motions, which ought to have been made from the first in the National Assembly:—firstly, the Citizen Guard; secondly, the early organization of a true, elective, and annual *Commune*; thirdly, an address to the King, for the removal of the troops and the liberty of the Assembly, and for the revocation of the *coup d'état* of the 23rd.

On the very day of the first assembly of the electors, as if the cry to arms had resounded in the barracks, the soldiers of the French Guards, confined for several days past, overpowered their guard, walked about in Paris, and went to fraternise with the people in the Palais Royal. For some time past, secret societies had been forming among them; they swore they would obey no orders that might be contrary to those of the Assembly. The Act of the 23rd, in which the king declared, in the strongest manner, that *he would never change the institution of the army*; that is to say, that the nobility should for ever monopolize every grade, and that the plebeian could never rise, but that the common soldier would die in the ranks:—that unjustifiable declaration necessarily finished what the revolutionary contagion had begun.

The French Guards, residents in Paris, and mostly married men, had seen the dépôt in which the children of the soldiers were educated, free of expense, shortly before suppressed by M. Du Châtelet, their hard-hearted colonel. The only change made in the *military institutions*, was made against them.

In order to appreciate properly the words *institution of the army*, we should know, that in the budget of that time, the officers were reckoned at forty-six millions (of francs), and the soldiers at forty-four.\* We should know, that Jourdan, Joubert, and Kléber, who had served at first, quitted the military profession, as a desperate career,—a sort of no thoroughfare. Augereau was an under-officer in the infantry, Hoche a sergeant in the French Guards, and Marceau a common soldier; those noble-hearted and aspiring youths were fixed in this low condition for ever. Hoche, who was twenty-one years of age, nevertheless completed his own education, as if about to be a General-in-Chief; he devoured everything,

\* Necker, *Administration*, ii., 422, 435. (1784).

literature, politics, and even philosophy ; must we add, that this great man, in order to purchase a few books, used to embroider officers' waistcoats, and sell them in a coffee-house.\* The trifling pay of a soldier was, under one pretence or other, absorbed by deductions, which the officers squandered away among themselves.†

The insurrection of the French Guards was not a pretorian mutiny, a brutal riot of the soldiery,—it came in support of the declarations of the electors and the people. That truly French troop, Parisian in a great measure, followed the lead of Paris, followed the law, the living law,—the National Assembly.

They arrived in the Palais Royal, saluted, pressed, embraced, and almost stifled by the crowd. The soldier, that true paria of the ancient monarchy, so ill-treated by the nobles, is welcomed by the people. And what is he, under his uniform, but the very people ? Two brothers have met each other, the soldier and the citizen, two children of the same mother ; they fall into each other's arms, and burst into tears.

Hatred and party-spirit have vilified all that, disfigured those grand scenes, and soiled the page of history, at pleasure. A vast importance has been attached to this or that ridiculous anecdote ; a worthy amusement for petty minds ! All these immense commotions they have attributed to some miserable, insignificant causes. Paltry fools ! try to explain by a straw, washed away by the waves, the agitation of the ocean.

No : those movements were those of a whole people, true, sincere, immense, and unanimous ; France had her share in them, and so had Paris ; all men, (each in his own degree,) acted, some with their hands and voices, others with their minds, with their fervent wishes, from the depths of their hearts.

But why do I say France ? It would be more true to say the world. An envious enemy, a Genevese, imbued with every English prejudice, cannot help avowing, that at that decisive moment, the whole world was looking on, observing with uneasy sympathy the march of our Revolution, and feeling that Franco was doing, at her own risk and peril, the business of mankind.‡

Arthur Young, an English agriculturist, a positive, special

\* Rousselin, *Vie de Hoche*, i., 20.

† The single regiment of Beauce believed it was cheated of the sum of 240,727 francs.

‡ E. Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 135.

man, who had, whimsically enough, come to France, to study its modes of agriculture, at such a moment, is astonished at the deep silence reigning about Paris ; no coach, hardly a man. The terrible agitation concentrating everything within, made a desert of all beyond. He enters ; the tumult frightens him ; he traverses, in astonishment, that noisy capital. He is taken to the Palais Royal, the centre of the conflagration, the burning focus of the furnace. Ten thousand men were speaking at once ; ten thousand lights in the windows ; it was a day of victory for the people ; fire-works were let off, and bonfires made. Dazzled and confounded by that moving Babel, he hastily retires. Yet the lively and excessive emotion of that people, united in one common thought, soon gains upon the traveller ; he gradually becomes associated, without even being aware of his change of sentiments, to the hopes of liberty ; the Englishman prays for France.\*

All men forgot themselves. The place, that strange place where the scene was passing, seemed, at such moments, to forget itself. The Palais Royal was no longer the Palais Royal. Vice, in the grandeur of so sincere a passion, in the heat of enthusiasm, became pure for an instant. The most degraded raised their heads, and gazed at the sky ; their past life, like a bad dream, was gone, at least for a day ; they could not be virtuous, but they felt themselves heroic, in the name of the liberties of the world ! Friends of the people, brothers to one another, having no longer any selfish feeling, and quite ready to share everything.

That there were interested agitators in that multitude, cannot be doubted. The minority of the nobility, ambitious men, fond of noise, such as Lameth and Duport, worked upon the people by their pamphlets and agents. Others, still worse, joined them. All that took place, we must say, beneath the windows of the Duke of Orleans, before the eyes of that intriguing, greedy, polluted court. Alas ! who would not pity our Revolution ? That ingenuous, disinterested, sublime movement, spied and overlooked by those who hoped one day or other to turn it to their advantage !

\* Of course with many exceptions, and on condition that France adopts the constitution of England. Arthur Young's Travels, vol. i., *passim*.

Let us look at those windows. There I see distinctly a pure woman and a wicked man. These are Virtue and Vice, the king's counsellors, Madame de Genlis and Choderlos de Laclos. The parts are distinctly separated. In that house, where everything is false, Virtue is represented by Madame de Genlis,—hard-heartedness and mock sensibility, a torrent of tears and ink, the quackery of a model education, and the constant exhibition of the pretty Pamela.\* On this side of the palace is the philanthropic *bureau*, where charity is organised with much ostentation on the eve of elections.†

The time has gone by when the jockey-prince used to lay a wager after supper to run stark naked from Paris to Bagatelle. He is now the statesman before everything else, the head of a party; his mistresses will have it so. They have fondly wished for two things,—a good law for divorcees, and a change of dynasty. The political confidant of the prince is that gloomy taciturn man, who seems to say: "I conspire, we conspire." That mysterious Laclos who, by his little book, *Liaisons dangereuses*, flatters himself that he has caused the romantie to pass from vice to crime, and insinuates therein that flagitious gallantry is a useful prelude to political villany. That is the name he covets of all others, and that part he acts to perfection. Many, in order to flatter the prince, say: "Laclos is a villain."

It was not easy, however, to make a leader of this Duke of Orleans; he was broken down at that period, wasted in body and heart, and of very weak mind. Swindlers made him fabricate gold in the garrets of the Palais Royal, and they had made him acquainted with the devil.‡

\* Even so far as to send her, on horseback, into the middle of the riot, followed by a domestic in the Orleans livery.—Read the *Souvenirs* (i., p. 189,) of Madame Lebrun, who was a witness of this scene

† Brisson worked there some time.—*Mémoires*, ii., p. 430.

‡ The prince made gold, as it is ever made, with gold. However, among other ingredients, it was necessary to have a human skeleton that had been buried so many years and days. They sought among such dead bodies as were known, and it so happened that Pascal exactly fulfilled the conditions required. They bribed the keepers of Saint Etienne-du-Mont, and poor Pascal was handed over to the crucibles of the Palais Royal. Such, at least, is the account of a person, who, having long lived with Madame de Genlis, received from her this strange anecdote.



Another difficulty was, that this prince, besides all his acquired vices, possessed a natural one, both fundamental and durable, which does not cease with exhaustion, like the others, but remains faithful to its master: I mean avarice. "I would give," he would say, "public opinion for a six-franc piece." This was not an idle word. He had put it well in practice, when, in spite of public clamour, he built the Palais Royal.

His political advisers were not skilful enough to raise him from such abasement. They caused him to commit more than one false and imprudent step.

In 1788, Madame de Genlis' brother, a youth without any other title than that of officer in the house of Orleans, writes to the king, to ask nothing less than to be prime minister,—to get the place of Necker or Turgot; he will undertake to re-establish in a moment the finances of the monarchy. The Duke of Orleans allows himself to be the bearer of the incredible missive, hands it to the king, recommends it, and becomes the laughing-stock of the court.

The sage counsellors of the prince had hoped thus to bring the government quietly into his hands. Deceived in their hopes, they acted more openly, endeavoured to make a Guise a Cromwell, and courted the people. There, also, they met with great difficulties. All were not dupes; the city of Orleans did not elect the prince; and, by way of retaliation, he unceremoniously withdrew from it the benefits by which he had expected to purchase his election.

And yet nothing had been spared, neither money nor intrigue. Those who had the management of the business had had the precaution to attach a whole pamphlet of Sieyès to the electoral instructions which the duke sent into his domains, and thus to place their master under the name and patronage of that great thinker, then so popular, who however had no kind of connection with the Duke of Orleans.

When the Commons took the decisive step of assuming the title of *National Assembly*, the Duke of Orleans was informed that the time was come to show himself, to speak and act, and that a leader of a party could not remain mute. They prevailed upon him at least to read a speech of some four lines to engage the nobility to unite with the Third Estate. He did so; but whilst reading, his heart failed him, and he fainted. On

opening his vest, they saw that, in the dread of being assassinated by the court, this over-prudent prince used to wear, by way of cuirass, five or six waistcoats.\*

The day the *coup d'état* failed (June 23), the duke believed the king lost, and himself king on the morrow, or next day ; he could not conceal his joy.† The terrible fermentation in Paris on that evening and the next morning, sufficiently announced that a vast insurrection would burst forth. On the 25th, the minority of the nobility, perceiving that they must decline in importance if Paris should be the first to begin, went, with the Duke of Orleans at their head, to join the Commons. The prince's man, Sillery, the convenient husband of Madame de Genlis, pronounced, in the name of all, an ill-concocted discourse, such as might have been made by a mediator, an accepted arbiter between the king and the people : " Let us never lose sight of the respect that we owe to the best of kings. He offers us peace ; can we refuse to accept it ? " &c. In the evening, great was the rejoicing in Paris for this union of the noble friends of the people. An address to the assembly was lying at the Café de Foy ; everybody signed it, as many as three thousand persons, in haste, and most of them without reading it. That article, drawn by an able hand, contained one strange word respecting the Duke of Orleans : " This Prince, the object of public *veneration*." Such a word, for such a man, seemed cruelly derisive ; an enemy would not have been more bitter. The duke's awkward agents believed apparently that the boldest eulogium would also be the best paid.

Thank God ! the grandeur, the immensity of the movement, spared the Revolution that unworthy mediator. Ever since the 25th, the excitement was so unanimous, and the concord so powerful, that the agitators themselves ; hurried along by it, were obliged to abandon every pretension of directing it. Paris led the leaders. The Catalines of the saloons and *cafés* had only to follow in its train. An authority was suddenly found to be in Paris, which had been supposed to be without any chieftain or guide, the assembly of the electors. On the other hand, as the French Guards began to declare themselves, it was easy to

\* Ferrières, i, p. 52.

† Arthur Young, who was dining with him and other deputies, was shocked at seeing him laughing in his sleeve.

foresee that the new authority would not be wanting in force. To sum up all in one word, these anxious mediators might remain quiet ; if the assembly was a prisoner at Versailles, it had its asylum here, in the very heart of France, and, if necessary, Paris for an army.

The court, trembling with anger and indignation, and still more with fear, decided, on the evening of the 26th, to grant the re-union of the orders. The king invited the nobility to it, and in order to reserve to himself a means of protesting against all that was being done, the Count d'Artois was made to write those imprudent words (then untrue) : " The king's life is in danger."

On the 27th, therefore, the long-expected union at length took place. The rejoicing at Versailles was excessive, foolish, and ungovernable. The people made bonfires, and shouted "*Vive la Reine!*" The queen was obliged to appear in the balcony. The crowd then asked her to show them the dauphin, as a token of complete reconciliation and oblivion. She consented again, and re-appeared with her child. She did but so much the more despise that credulous crowd ; and she sent for troops.

She had taken no part in the union of the orders. And could it truly be called a union ? They were still enemies, though now assembled in the selfsame hall, brought into contact, and looking at one another. The clergy had made their express restrictions. The protest of the nobles were brought forward one by one, like so many challenges, and engrossed the whole time of the Assembly ; such as came, did not condescend to sit, but wandered about, or stood gazing like simple spectators. They did sit, but elsewhere,—in a meeting of their own. Many had said that they were leaving, but still remained at Versailles ; evidently, they were waiting.

The Assembly was wasting time. The lawyers, who composed the majority, spoke frequently and at great length, trusting too much to language. According to them, if the constitution were but made, everything was saved. As if a constitution can be anything with a government continually conspiring ! A paper liberty, written or verbal, whilst despotism possesses the power and the sword ! This is nonsense,—absurdity !

But neither the court nor Paris desired any compromise. Everything was inclining towards open violence. The military gentlemen of the court were impatient to act. M. Du Châtelet, the colonel of the French Guards, had already sent to the Abbaye eleven of those soldiers who had sworn to obey no orders contrary to those of the Assembly. Neither did he stop there. He wanted to remove them from the military prison, and send them to the one for thieves, to that horrible sink, gaol and hospital at once, which subjected to the same lash the galley-slaves and the *vétériens*.\* The terrible case of Latude, cast there to die, had revealed Bicêtre,—thrown the first light upon it; and a recent book, by Mirabeau, had filled every heart with disgust and every mind with terror.† And it was there they were going to imprison men whose greatest offence was to wish to be only the soldiers of the law.

The very day they were to be transferred to Bicêtre, the news reached the Palais Royal. A young man standing upon a chair, called out, “To the Abbaye! and let us deliver those who would not fire upon the people!” Soldiers offer themselves; but the citizens thank them, and go alone. The crowd increases on the road, and is joined by workmen with strong iron bars. At the Abbaye, they were four thousand in number. They burst open the wicket, and break down the large inside doors with their mallets, axes, and crow-bars. The victims are liberated. As they were going out, they met a body of hussars and dragoons, who were arriving full gallop with their swords drawn. The people rush at their bridles; an explanation ensues; the soldiers will not massacre the soldiers’ deliverers; they sheathe their swords, and take off their helmets; wine is brought; and they all drink together to the king and the nation.

Everybody in the prison was set at liberty at the same time. The crowd conduct their conquest home,—to the Palais Royal. Among the prisoners delivered, they carried off an old soldier who had been rotting many years in the Abbaye, and was no

\* Will it be believed that in 1790, they still executed at Bicêtre the old barbarous ordinances which prescribed that the medical treatment of such patients should begin by a flagellation? The celebrated doctor Cullorier stated the fact to one of my friends.

† *Observations d'un Anglais sur Bicêtre, trad. et commentées par Mirabeau, 1788.*

longer able to walk. The poor fellow, who had so long been accustomed to receive nothing but ill-treatment, was overpowered by his emotion : " I shall die, gentlemen," said he, " so much kindness will kill me ! "

There was only one great criminal among them, and he was taken back to prison. All the others, citizens, soldiers, and prisoners, forming an immense procession, arrive at the Palais Royal. There they place a table in the garden, and make them all sit down. The difficulty was to lodge them. They house them for the night in the *Théâtre des Variétés*, and mount guard at the door. The next morning, they were located in an hotel, under the arcades, and paid for and fed by the people. All night, either side of Paris had been illuminated, the neighbourhood of the Abbaye and the Palais Royal. Citizens, workmen, rich and poor, dragoons, hussars, and French Guards, all walked about together, and no other noise was heard but the shouts of "*Vive la nation !*" They all gave themselves up to the transports of that fraternal union, to their dawning confidence in the birth of liberty.

Early in the morning, the young men were at Versailles, at the doors of the Assembly. There, everything wore a freezing aspect. A military insurrection and a prison broken open, appeared, at Versailles, most ill-omened. Mirabeau, avoiding the chief question, proposed an address to the Parisians, to advise them to be orderly. They at length came to the conclusion (not very comfortable for those who claimed the interference of the Assembly) of declaring that the affair belonged to nobody but the king, and all they could do was to implore his clemency.

This was on the 1st of July. On the 2nd, the king wrote,—not to the Assembly, but to the Archbishop of Paris,—that if the culprits returned to prison, he might pardon them. The crowd considered this promise so unsatisfactory, that they repaired to the Hotel-de-Ville and demanded of the electors what they were to believe. The latter hesitated a long time ; but the crowd insisted ; and was increasing every instant. An hour after midnight, the electors promise to go on the morrow to Versailles, and *not to return without the pardon*. Trusting to their word, the liberated again returned to prison, and were soon enlarged.

This was not a state of peace. Paris was surrounded by war: all the foreign troops had arrived. The old Marshal De Broglie, that Hercules and Achilles of the old monarchy, had been called to command them. The queen had sent for Breteuil, her confidential man, the ex-ambassador at Vienna, a valiant penman, but who, for noise and bravado, was equal to any swordsman. "His big manly voice sounded like energy; he used to step heavily and stamp with his foot, as if he would conjure an army out of the earth."

All this warlike preparation at length aroused the Assembly. Mirabeau, who had read on the 27th an address for peace, without being listened to, now proposed a new one for the removal of the troops; that sonorous and harmonious speech, extremely flattering for the king, was very much relished by the Assembly. The best thing it contained, a demand for a citizen guard, was the only part they suppressed.\*

The Paris electors, who had been the first to make this request now rejected by the Assembly, resumed it energetically on the 10th of July. Carra, in a very abstract dissertation, in the manner of Sieyès, set forth the right of the Commune,—an imprescriptible right, and, said he, *even anterior to that of the monarchy*, which right specially comprehends that of self-protection. Bonneville demanded, in his own name, and in that of his friend Fauchet, that they should pass on from theory to practice, and think of constituting themselves as a commune, preserving *provisionally* the *pretended* municipal body. Charton wished moreover the sixty districts to be assembled again, their decisions to be transmitted to the National Assembly, and a *correspondence to be formed with the chief cities* of the kingdom. All these bold motions were made in the great hall of Saint-Jean, in the Hôtel de Ville, in presence of an immense multitude. Paris seemed to crowd fondly about this authority which it had created, and to trust to no other; it wanted to obtain from it the permission to organize and arm itself, and thus to work out its own salvation.

\* It is not unlikely that the Duke of Orleans, seeing that his mediation was by no means solicited, urged Mirabeau to speak, in order to perplex the court, before it had completed its preparations for war. M. Droz assigns to this period the first connexion of Mirabeau with Lacroix, and the money he received from him.



The weakness of the National Assembly was not calculated to give it comfort. On the 11th of July it had received the king's answer to the address, and remained satisfied with it. Yet, what was the answer? That the troops were there to secure the liberty of the Assembly; but that, if they gave umbrage, the king would transfer it to Noyon or Soissons; that is, would place it between two or three divisions of the army. Mirabeau could not prevail on them to insist on the troops being removed. It was evident that the junction of the five hundred deputies of the clergy and nobility had enervated the Assembly. It set the grand business aside, and gave its attention to a declaration of the rights of man presented by Lafayette.

One of the moderate, most moderate members, the philanthropic Guillotin, went to Paris on purpose to communicate this state of tranquillity to the assembly of the electors. That honest man, doubtless deceived, assured them that everything was going on prosperously, and that M. Necker was stronger than ever. That excellent news was hailed with loud applause, and the electors, no less duped than the Assembly, amused themselves in like manner with admiring the declaration of rights which, by good fortune, was also just brought from Versailles. That very day, whilst honest Guillotin was speaking, M. Necker, dismissed, was already very far on his road to Brussels.

When Necker received the order to depart immediately, it was three o'clock, and he was sitting down to table. The poor man, who always so tenderly embraced the ministry, and never left it without weeping, contrived however to restrain his emotion before his guests, and to keep his countenance. After dinner he departed with his wife, without even giving notice to his daughter, and took the nearest way out of the country,—the road to the Netherlands. The queen's party, shameful to relate, were anxious to have him arrested; they were so little acquainted with Necker, that they were afraid he might disobey the king, and throw himself into Paris.

MM. de Broglie and de Breteuil, the first day they were summoned, had themselves been frightened to see the dangers into which they were running. Broglie was unwilling that Necker should be sent away. Breteuil is said to have exclaimed: "Give us then a hundred thousand men and a

hundred millions." "You shall have them," said the queen. And they set about secretly fabricating paper-money.\*

M. de Broglie, taken unawares, stooping beneath his burden of seventy-one years, bustled about but did nothing. Orders and counter-orders flew to and fro. His mansion was the headquarters, full of scribes, ordinances, and aides-de-camp, ready to mount on horse-back. "They made out a list of general officers and drew up an order of battle."†

The military authorities were not too well agreed among themselves. There were no less than three commanders. Broglie, who was about to be minister, Puysegur, who was so still, and lastly Besenval, who had had for eight years the command of the provinces of the interior, and to whom they intimated unceremoniously that he would have to obey the old marshal. Besenval explained to him the dangerous position of things, and that they were not *en campagne*, but before a city of eight hundred thousand souls in a state of feverish excitement. Broglie would not listen to him. Strong in his conceit of his Seven Years' War, being acquainted with nothing but soldiers and physical force, full of contempt for citizens, he felt perfectly convinced that at the mere sight of an uniform the people would run away. He did not consider it necessary to send troops to Paris; he merely surrounded it with foreign regiments, being quite unconcerned about thus increasing the popular excitement. All those German soldiers presented the appearance of a Swiss or an Austrian invasion. The outlandish names of the regiments sounded harsh to the ear: Royal-Cravate was at Charenton, Reinach and Diesbach at Sèvres, Nassau at Versailles, Salis-Samade at Issy, the hussars of Bercheny at the Military School; at other stations were Châteaueux, Esterazy, Rømer, &c.

The Bastille, sufficiently defended by its thick walls, had just received a reinforcement of Swiss soldiers. It had ammunition and a monstrous quantity of gunpowder, enough to blow up the town. The cannon, mounted *en batterie* upon the towers ever since the 30th of June, frowned upon Paris, and ready loaded, thrust their menacing jaws between the battlements.

\* "Several of my colleagues told me they had seen printed ones."—Bailly, i. pp. 395, 331.

† Besenval, ii., 359.

## CHAPTER VI.

## INSURRECTION OF PARIS.

Danger of Paris.—Explosion of Paris, July 12th, 1789.—Inaction of Versailles.—Provocation of the Troops; Paris arms.—The National Assembly applies in vain to the King, July 13th.—The Electors of Paris authorise the People to arm.—Organisation of the Citizen Guard.—Hesitation of the Electors.—The People seize on the Powder Magazines and search for Guns.—Security of the Court.

FROM the 23rd of June to the 12th of July, from the king's menace to the outbreak of the people, there was a strange pause. It was, says an observer of those days, a stormy, heavy, gloomy time, like a feverish, painful dream, full of illusions and anxiety. There were false alarms, false news, and all sorts of fables and inventions. People knew, but nothing for certain. They wished to account for and guess at everything. Profound causes were discovered even in indifferent things. Partial risings began, without any author or project, of their own accord, from a general fund of distrust and sullen anger. The ground was burning, and as if undermined; and, underneath, you might hear already the grumbling of the volcano.

We have seen that, at the very first assembly of the electors, Bonneville had cried: "To arms!"—a strange cry in that assembly of the notables of Paris, and which expired of itself. Many were indignant, others smiled, and one of them said prophetically: "Young man, postpone your motion for a fortnight."

To arms? What, against a ready organised army at the gates? To arms? when that army could so easily furnish the city, when famine was already beginning to be felt, and when the crowd was hourly growing larger at the doors of the bakers. The poor of the neighbouring country were flocking to town by every road, wan and ragged, leaning on their long walking-sticks. A mass of twenty thousand beggars, employed at Montmartre, was suspended over the town; and if Paris made a movement, this other army might come down. A few had already attempted to burn and pillage the barrier-houses.

It was almost certain that the court would strike the first

blow. It was necessary for it to compel the king to lay aside his scruples, his hankering for peace, and do away at once with every compromise. To effect this it was necessary to conquer.

Young officers in the hussars, such as Sombreuil and Polignac, went even into the Palais Royal to defy the crowd, and left it sword in hand. Evidently, the court fancied itself too strong; it wished for violence.\*

On Sunday morning, July 12th, nobody at Paris, up to 10 o'clock, had yet heard of Necker's dismissal. The first who spoke of it in the Palais Royal was called an aristocrat, and insulted. But the news is confirmed; it spreads; and so does the fury of the people. It was then noon, and the cannon of the Palais Royal was fired. "It is impossible," says the *Ami du Roi*, "to express the gloomy feeling of terror which pervaded every soul on hearing that report." A young man, Camille Desmoulins, rushed from the Café de Foy, leaped upon a table, drew a sword, and showed a pistol:—"To arms!" cried he; "the Germans in the Champ de Mars will enter Paris to-night, to butcher the inhabitants! Let us hoist a cockade!" He tore down a leaf from a tree, and stuck it in his hat: everybody followed his example; and the trees were stripped of their leaves.

"No theatres! no dancing! This is a day of mourning!" They go and fetch, from a collection of wax-figures, a bust of Necker; others, ever at hand to seize the opportunity, add one of the Duke of Orleans. They cover them with crape, and carry them through Paris: the procession, armed with staves, swords, pistols, and hatchets, proceeds first up the Rue Richelieu, then turning the *boulevard*, and the streets St. Martin, Saint-Denis, and Saint-Honoré, arrives at the Place Vendôme. There, in front of the hotels of the farmers of the revenue, a detachment of dragoons was waiting for the people; it charged them, put them to flight, and destroyed their Necker; one of the French guards, unarmed, stood his ground, and was killed.

\* "Take care," said Doctor Marat, a philanthropic physician, in one of the innumerable pamphlets of the day, "take care, consider what would be the fatal consequences of a seditious movement. If you are so unfortunate as to engage in it, you are treated as rebels; blood flows," &c. This prudence was conspicuous in many people.

The barriers, which were scarcely finished,—those oppressive little bastilles of the farmers of the revenue,—were attacked everywhere on that same Sunday, by the people, and but ill-defended by the troops, who however killed a few persons. They were burnt during the night.

The court, so near Paris, could not be ignorant of what was passing. It remained motionless, and sent neither orders nor troops. Apparently, it was waiting till the disturbance, increasing to rebellion and war, should give it what the Réveillon riot (too soon appeased) had not been able to give—a specious pretext for dissolving the Assembly. Therefore, it allowed Paris to go on doing mischief at pleasure. It guarded well Versailles, the bridges of Sèvres and Saint-Cloud, cut off all communication, and believed itself sure of being able, if things came to the worst, to furnish the city of Paris. As for itself, surrounded by troops, of which two-thirds were German, what had it to fear? Nothing, but to lose France.

The minister of Paris (there was one still) remained at Versailles. The other authorities, the lieutenant of police, Flesselles the provost, and Berthier the intendant, appeared equally inactive. Flesselles, summoned to court, was unable to go there; but it is likely he received instructions.\*

Besenal, the commander, without any responsibility, since he could act only by the orders of Broglie, remained idly at the Military School. He durst not make use of the French guards, and kept them confined. But he had several detachments of different corps, and three disposable regiments, one of Swiss, and two of German cavalry. Towards the afternoon, seeing the riot increasing, he posted his Swiss in the *Champs-Élysées* with four pieces of cannon, and drew up his cavalry on the Place Louis XV.

Before evening, before the hour at which people return home on Sunday, the crowd was coming back by the *Champs-Élysées*, and filling the gardens of the Tuileries; they were, for the most part, quiet people taking their walk, families who wanted to return home early “because there had been disturbances.” However, the sight of those German soldiers, drawn up in

As we learn from the king himself. See his first reply (July 14th) to the National Assembly.



order of battle on the spot, necessarily excited some indignation. Some of the men abused them, and children threw stones.\* Then Besenval, fearing at length lest he should be reproached at Versailles with having done nothing, gave the insensate, barbarous order, so like his thoughtlessness, to drive the people forward with the dragoons. They could not move in that dense crowd without trampling on some of them. Their colonel, prince of Lambesc, entered the Tuileries, at first at a slow pace. He was stopped by a barricade of chairs; and being assailed by a shower of bottles and stones, he fired upon the crowd. The women shrieked, and the men tried to shut the gates behind the prince. He had the presence of mind to retire. One man was thrown down and trampled upon; and an old man whilst trying to escape was grievously wounded.

The crowd, rushing out of the Tuileries, with exclamations of horror and indignation, filled Paris with the account of this brutality, of those Germans driving their horses against women and children, and even the old man wounded, so they said, by the hand of the prince himself. Then they run to the gunsmiths and take whatever they find. They hasten also to the Hôtel de Ville to demand arms and ring the alarm-bell. No municipal magistrate was at his post. A few electors, of their own good-will, repaired thither about six in the evening, occupied their reserved seats in the great hall, and tried to calm the multitude. But behind that crowd, already entered, there was another in the square, shouting "Arms!" who believed the town possessed a secret arsenal, and were threatening to burn everything. They overpowered the guard, invaded the hall, pushed down the barriers, and pressed the electors as far as their bureau. Then they related to them a thousand accounts at once of what has just happened. The electors could not refuse the arms of the city guards; but the crowd

\* If there had been any pistols fired by the people, or any dragoons wounded, as Besenval has stated, Desèze, his very clever defender, would not have failed to make the most of it in his *Observations sur le rapport d'accusation*. See this report in the *Histoire Parlementaire*, iv., p. 69; and Desèze, at the end of Besenval, ii., p. 369. Who is to be believed, Desèze, who pretends that Besenval gave no orders, or Besenval, who confesses before his judges that *he had a strong desire* to drive away that crowd, and that he gave orders to charge?—*Hist. Parl.*, ii., p. 89.



had sought, found, and taken them ; and already a man in his shirt, without either shoes or stockings, had taken the place of the sentinel, and with his gun on his shoulder was resolutely mounting guard at the door of the hall.\*

The electors declined the responsibility of authorising the insurrection. They only granted the convocation of the districts, and sent a few of their friends "to the posts of the armed citizens, to entreat them, in the name of their native land, to suspend riotous meetings and acts of violence." They had begun that evening in a very serious manner. Some French guards having escaped from their barracks, formed in the Palais Royal, marched against the Germans, and avenged their comrade. They killed three of the cavalry on the *boulevard*, and then marched to the Place Louis XV., which they found evacuated.

On Monday, July 13th, Guillotin the deputy, with two electors, went to Versailles, and entreated the Assembly to "concur in establishing a citizen guard." They gave a terrible description of the crisis of Paris. The Assembly voted two deputations, one to the king, the other to the city. That to the king obtained from him only a cold unsatisfactory answer, and a very strange one when blood was flowing : That he could make no alterations in the measures he had taken, that he was the only judge of their necessities, and that the presence of the deputies at Paris could do no good. The indignant Assembly decreed :—1st, that M. Necker bore with him the regret of the nation ; 2ndly, that it insisted on the removal of the troops ; 3rdly, that not only the ministers, but the king's counsellors, of *whatever rank* they might be, were personally responsible for the present misfortunes ; 4thly, that no power had the right to pronounce the infamous word "bankruptcy." The third article sufficiently designated the queen and the princes, and the last branded them with reproach. The Assembly thus resumed its noble attitude ; unarmed in the middle of the troops, without any other support than the law, threatened that very evening to be dispersed or made away

\* *Procès-Verbal des Électeurs*, i., p. 180. Compare Dussaulx, *Œuvre des Sept Jours*. Dussaulx, who wrote some time after, often inverts the order of the facts.

with, it yet bravely branded its enemies on their brow with their true name : *bankrupts*.\*

After that vote, the Assembly had but one asylum—the Assembly itself, the room it occupied ; beyond that, it had not an inch of ground in the world ; not one of its members durst any longer sleep at home. It feared also lest the court should seize upon its archives. On the preceding evening, Sunday, Grégoire, one of the secretaries, had folded up, sealed, and hidden all the papers in a house at Versailles.†

On Monday he presided, *per interim*, and sustained by his courage the weak-hearted, by reminding them of the Tennis-Court, and the words of the Roman : “ Fearless amid the crush of worlds.” (*Impavidum ferient ruinæ*.)

The sitting was declared permanent, and it continued for seventy-two hours. M. Lafayette, who had contributed not a little to the vigorous decree, was named vice-president.

Meanwhile Paris was in the utmost anxiety. The Faubourg Saint-Honoré expected every moment to see the troops enter. In spite of the efforts of the electors, who ran about all night to make the people lay down their arms, everybody was arming ; nobody was disposed to receive the Croats and the Hungarian hussars peaceably, and to carry the keys to the queen. As early as six o'clock on Monday morning, all the bells in every Church sounding alarm, a few electors repaired to the Hôtel-de-Ville, found the crowd already assembled, and sent it off to the different districts. At eight o'clock, seeing the people were in earnest, they affirmed that the citizen guard was authorised, which was not yet the case. The people were perpetually shouting for arms. To which the electors reply : If the town has any, they can only be obtained through the mayor. “ Well then,” cried they, “ send for him ! ”

The mayor, or provost, Flesselles, was on that day summoned to Versailles by the king, and to the Hôtel-de-Ville by the people. Whether he durst not refuse the summons of the crowd, or thought he could better serve the King at Paris, he went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, was applauded in La Grève, and said in a

\* They were going to make payments with a paper-money, without any other guarantee than the signature of an insolvent king See *ante*, p. 131.

† *Mémoires de Grégoire*, i., p. 382

fatherly tone : “ You shall be satisfied, my friends, I am your father.” He declared in the hall that he would preside only by election of the people. Thereupon, a fresh burst of enthusiasm.

Though there was as yet no Parisian army, they were already discussing who should be its general. The American Moreau de Saint-Mère, the president of the electors, pointed to a bust of Lafayette, and that name was received with applause. Others proposed and obtained that the command should be offered to the Duke d’Aumont, who demanded twenty-four hours for reflection, and then refused. The second in command was the Marquis de la Salle, a well-trying soldier, a patriotic writer, full of devotion and probity.

All this was wasting time, and the crowd was in a fever of impatience ; it was in a hurry to be armed, and not without reason. The beggars of Montmartre, throwing away their spades, came down upon the town ; crowds of unknown vagrants were prowling about. The frightful misery of the rural districts had poured, from all sides, their starving populations towards Paris : it was peopled by famine.

That same morning, on a report that there was some corn at Saint-Lazare, the crowd ran thither, and found indeed an enormous quantity of flour, amassed by the good friars, enough to load more than fifty carts which were driven to market. They broke open everything, and ate and drank what was in the house ; however, they carried nothing away ; the first who attempted to do so, was hung by the people themselves.

The prisoners of Saint-Lazare had escaped. Those of La Force who had been imprisoned for debt were set at liberty. The criminals of Le Châtelet wanted to take advantage of the opportunity, and were already breaking down the doors. The gaoler called in a band of the people who were passing ; it entered, fired upon the rebels, and forced them to become orderly again.

The arms of the store-room were carried off, but subsequently all restored.

The electors, being unable to defer the arming any longer, attempted to keep it within limits. They voted, and the provost pronounced : That each of the sixty districts should elect and arm two hundred men, and that all the rest should be dis-

armed. It was an army of *twelve thousand* respectable persons, wonderfully good for police, but very bad for the defence. Paris would have been given up. In the afternoon of the same day, it was decided : That the Parisian police should consist of *forty-eight thousand* men. The cockade was to be of the colours of the city, blue and red.\* This decree was confirmed on the same day by all the districts.

A permanent committee is named to watch night and day over public order. It is formed of electors. "Why electors alone?" said a man, stepping forward. "Why, whom would you have named?" "Myself," said he. He was appointed by acclamation.

The provost then ventured to put a very serious question : "To whom shall the oath be taken?" "To the Assembly of the Citizens," exclaimed an elector with energy.

The question of subsistence was as urgent as that of arms. The lieutenant of police, on being summoned by the electors, said that the supplies of corn were entirely beyond his jurisdiction. The town was necessarily obliged to think about obtaining provisions as it could. The roads in every direction were occupied with troops ; it was necessary for the farmers and traders who brought their merchandise to run the risk of passing through military posts and camps of foreigners, who spoke nothing but German. And even supposing they did arrive, they met with a thousand difficulties in re-passing the barriers.

Paris was evidently to die of hunger, or conquer, and to conquer in one day. How was this miracle to be expected? It had the enemy in the very town, in the Bastille, and at the Military School, and every barrier besieged ; the French guards, except a small number, remained in their barracks, and had not yet made up their minds. That the miracle should be wrought by the Parisians quite alone, was almost ridiculous to suppose. They had the reputation of being a gentle, quiet, good-natured sort of population. That such people should become, all of a sudden, an army, and a warlike army, was most unlikely.

This was certainly the opinion of the cool-headed notables

\* But as they were also those of the house of Orleans, white, the old colour of France, was added, on the proposal of M. de Lafayette.—See his *Mémoires*, ii., p. 266. "I give you," said he, "a cockade which will go round the world."

and citizens who composed the committee of the town. They wanted to gain time, and not to increase the immense responsibility which weighed already upon them. They had governed Paris ever since the 12th; was it as electors? did the electoral power extend so far? They expected every moment to see the old Marshal de Broglie arrive with all his troops to call them to account. Hence their hesitation, and their conduct so long equivocal; hence, also, the distrust of the people, who found in them their principal obstacle, and did business without them.

About the middle of the day, the electors who had been sent to Versailles, returned with the king's threatening answer, and the decree of the Assembly.

There was nothing left but war. The envoys had met on the road the green cockade, the colour of the Count d'Artois. They had passed through the cavalry and all the German troops stationed along the road in their white Austrian cloaks.

The situation of things was terrible, unprovided for, almost hopeless, considering the materials. But the courage of the people was immense; everybody felt his heart waxing hourly stronger within his bosom. They all marched to the Hôtel-de-Ville, to offer themselves for the fight; there were whole corporations, whole quarters of the town forming legions of volunteers. The company of arquebusiers offered its services. The school of surgery came forward with Boyer at its head; the Basoche wanted to take the lead and fight in the vanguard: all those young men swore they would die to the last man.

Fight? But with what? Without arms, guns, and powder?

The arsenal was said to be empty. The people however were not so easily satisfied. An invalid and a peruke-maker kept watch in the neighbourhood; and soon they saw a large quantity of powder brought out, which was going to be embarked for Rouen. They ran to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and obliged the electors to command the powder to be brought. A brave *abbé* undertook the dangerous mission of guarding it and distributing it among the people.\*

\* This heroic man was the *abbé* Lefebvre d'Ormesson. Nobody rendered a greater service to the Revolution and the city of Paris. He remained forty-eight hours upon that volcano, among madmen fighting for the powder; they fired at him several times; a drunken man went and smoked upon the open casks, &c.



Nothing was now wanting but guns. It was well known that there was a large magazine of them in Paris. Berthier, the intendant, had caused thirty thousand to be imported, and had commanded two hundred thousand cartridges to be made. The provost could not possibly be ignorant of these active measures at the intendant's office. Urged to point out the depot, he said the manufactory at Charleville had promised him thirty thousand guns, and moreover, twelve thousand were momentarily expected. To support this falsehood, waggons inscribed with the word *Artillerie* are seen passing through La Grève. These must evidently be the guns. The provost orders the cases to be stowed in the magazines. But he must have French guards to distribute them. The people run to the barracks; but, as they might have expected, the officers will not give a single soldier. So the electors must distribute the guns themselves. They open the cases! Judge what they find. Rags! The fury of the people knows no bounds; they shout out "Treason!" Flesselles, not knowing what to say, thinks it best to send them to the Célestin and the Chartreux friars, saying:—"The monks have arms concealed." Another disappointment: the Chartreux friars open and show everything; and not a gun is found after the closest search.

The electors authorised the districts to manufacture fifty thousand pikes; they were forged in thirty-six hours; yet even that dispatch seemed too slow for such a crisis. Everything might be decided in the night. The people, who always knew things when their leaders did not, heard, in the evening, of the grand depot of guns at the Invalides. The deputies of one district went, the same evening, to Besenval, the commandant, and Sombreuil, the governor of the Hôtel. "I will write to Versailles about it," said Besenval, coldly. Accordingly, he gave notice to the Marshal de Broglie. Most strange to say, he received no answer!

This inconceivable silence was doubtless owing, as it has been alleged, to the complete anarchy that reigned in the council: all differing on every point, excepting a very decided one, the dissolution of the National Assembly. It was likewise owing, in my opinion, to the misconception of the court, who, over cunning and subtle, looked upon that great insurrection as the effect of a petty intrigue, believed that the



Palais Royal did everything, and that Orleans paid for all. A puerile explanation. Is it possible to bribe millions of men? Had the duke paid also the insurrections at Lyons and in Dauphiné, which, at that very moment, had loudly refused to pay the taxes? Had he bribed the cities of Brittany, which were rising up in arms, or the soldiers, who, at Rennes, refused to fire upon the citizens?

The prince's effigy had, it is true, been carried in triumph. But the prince himself had come to Versailles to surrender to his enemies, and to protest that he was as much afraid of the riot as anybody, or even more so. He was requested to have the goodness to sleep at the castle. The court, having him under its hand, thought it held fast the fabricator of the whole machination, and felt more at its ease. The old marshal, to whom all the military forces were intrusted at that moment, surrounded himself well with troops, held the king in safety, put Versailles, which nobody thought of, in a state of defence, and looking upon the insurrection of Paris as so much smoke, left it to subside of itself.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE, JULY 14, 1789.

Difficulty of taking the Bastille.—The Idea of the Attack belongs to the People.—Hatred of the People towards the Bastille.—The Joy of the World on hearing of the taking of the Bastille.—The People carry off the Guns from the Invalides.—The Bastille was in a State of Defence.—Thuriot summons the Bastille to surrender.—The Electors send to it uselessly several Deputations.—Last Attack; Elie, Hulin.—Danger of Delay.—The People believe themselves betrayed; they menace the Provost and the Electors.—The Conquerors at the Hôtel-de-Ville.—How the Bastille surrendered.—Death of the Governor.—Prisoners put to Death.—Prisoners Pardoned.—Clemency of the People.

VERSAILLES, with an organised government, a king, ministers, a general, and an army, was all hesitation, doubt, uncertainty, and in a state of the most complete moral anarchy.

Paris, all commotion, destitute of every legal authority, and in the utmost confusion, attained, on the 14th of July, what is morally the highest degree of order,—unanimity of feeling.

On the 13th, Paris thought only of defending itself; on the 14th, it attacked.

On the evening of the 13th, some doubt still existed, but none remained in the morning. The evening had been stormy, agitated by a whirlwind of ungovernable frenzy. The morning was still and serene,—an awful calm.

With daylight, one idea dawned upon Paris, and all were illumined with the same ray of hope. A light broke upon every mind, and the same voice thrilled through every heart: "Go! and thou shalt take the Bastille!" That was impossible, unreasonable, preposterous. And yet everybody believed it. And the thing was done.

The Bastille, though an old fortress, was nevertheless impregnable, unless besieged for several days and with an abundance of artillery. The people had, in that crisis, neither the time nor the means to make a regular siege. Had they done so, the Bastille had no cause for fear, having enough provisions to wait for succour so near at hand, and an immense supply of ammunition. Its walls, ten feet thick at the top of the towers, and thirty or forty at the base, might long laugh at cannon-balls; and its batteries firing down upon Paris, could, in the meantime, demolish the whole of the Marais and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Its towers, pierced with windows and loop-holes, protected by double and triple gratings, enabled the garrison, in full security, to make a dreadful carnage of its assailants.

The attack on the Bastille was by no means reasonable. It was an act of faith.

Nobody proposed; but all believed, and all acted. Along the streets, the quays, the bridges, and the boulevards, the crowd shouted to the crowd: "To the Bastille! The Bastille!" And the tolling of the tocsin thundered in every ear: "*à la Bastille!*"

Nobody, I repeat, gave the impulse. The orators of the Palais Royal passed the time in drawing up a list of proscription, in condemning the queen to death, as well as Madame de Polignac, Artois, Flesselles the provost, and others. The names of the conquerors of the Bastille do not include one of these makers of motions. The Palais Royal was not the starting-point, neither was it to the Palais Royal that the conquerors brought back the spoils and prisoners.

Still less had the electors, assembled in the Hôtel-de-Ville, the idea of the attack. On the contrary, in order to prevent it, as well as the carnage which the Bastille could so easily make, they went so far as to promise the governor, that if he withdrew his cannon he should not be attacked. The electors did not behave treacherously, though they were accused of having done so ; but they had no faith.

Who had ? They who had also the devotion and the strength to accomplish their faith. Who ? Why, the people, —everybody.

Old men who have had the happiness and the misery to see all that has happened in this unprecedented half century, in which ages seem to be crowded together, declare, that the grand and national achievements of the Republic and the Empire, had nevertheless a partial non-unanimous character, but that the 14th of July alone was the day of the whole people. Then let that grand day remain ever one of the eternal *fêtes* of the human race, not only as having been the first of deliverance, but as having been superlatively the day of concord !

What had happened during that short night, on which nobody slept, for every uncertainty and difference of opinion to disappear with the shades of darkness, and all to have the same thoughts in the morning ?

What took place at the Palais Royal and the Hôtel-de-Ville is well known ; but what would be far more important to know, is, what took place on the domestic hearth of the people.

For there indeed, as we may sufficiently divine by what followed, there every heart summoned the past to its day of judgment, and every one, before a blow was struck, pronounced its irrevocable condemnation. History returned that night a long history of sufferings to the avenging instinct of the people. The souls of fathers who, for so many ages, had suffered and died in silence, descended into their sons, and spoke.

O brave men, you who till then had been so patient, so pacific, who, on that day, were to inflict the heavy blow of Providence, did not the sight of your families, whose only resource is in you, daunt your hearts ? Far from it : gazing once more at your slumbering children, those children for

whom that day was to create a destiny, your expanding minds embraced the free generations arising from their cradle, and felt at that moment the whole battle of the future !

The future and the past both gave the same reply ; both cried Advance ! And what is beyond all time,—beyond the future and the past,—immutable right said the same. The immortal sentiment of the Just imparted a temper of adamant to the fluttering heart of man ; it said to him : “ Go in peace ; what matters ? Whatever may happen, I am with thee, in death or victory ! ”

And yet what was the Bastille to them ? The lower orders seldom or never entered it. Justice spoke to them, and, a voice that speaks still louder to the heart, the voice of humanity and mercy ; that still small voice which seems so weak but that overthrows towers, had, for ten years, been shaking the very foundations of the doomed Bastille.

Let the truth be told ; if any one had the glory of causing its downfall, it was that intrepid woman who wrought so long for the deliverance of Latude against all the powers in the world. Royalty refused, and the nation forced it to pardon ; that woman, or that hero, was crowned in a public solemnity. To crown her who had, so to speak, forced open the state-prisons, was already branding them with infamy, devoting them to public execration, and demolishing them in the hearts and desires of men. That woman had shaken the Bastille to its foundations.

From that day, the people of the town and the faubourg, who, in that much-frequented quarter, were ever passing and re-passing in its shadow, never failed to curse it.\* And well did it deserve their hatred. There were many other prisons, but this one was the abode of capricious arbitrariness, wanton despotism, and ecclesiastical and bureaucratical inquisition. The court, so devoid of religion in that age, had made the Bastille a dungeon for free minds,—the prison of thought. Less crowded during the reign of Louis XVI., it had become more cruel ; the prisoners were deprived of their walk : more rigorous, and no less unjust : we blush for France, to be

\* *Elle écrasait la rue Saint-Antoine*, is Linguet's energetical expression, p. 147. The best known conquerors of the Bastille were, either men of the Faubourg, or of the quarter Saint-Paul, of the Culture-Sainte-Catherine.

obliged to say that the crime of one of the prisoners was to have given a useful secret to our navy ! They were afraid lest he should tell it elsewhere.

The Bastille was known and detested by the whole world. Bastille and tyranny were, in every language, synonymous terms. Every nation, at the news of its destruction, believed it had recovered its liberty.

In Russia, that empire of mystery and silence,—that monstrous Bastille between Europe and Asia, scarcely had the news arrived when you might have seen men of every nation shouting and weeping for joy in the open streets ; they rushed into each other's arms to tell the news : “ Who can help weeping for joy ? *The Bastille is taken.*” \*

On the very morning of that great day, the people had as yet no arms.

The powder they had taken from the arsenal the night before, and put in the Hôtel-de-Ville, was slowly distributed to them, during the night, by only three men. The distribution having ceased for a moment, about two o'clock, the desperate crowd hammered down the doors of the magazine, every blow striking fire on the nails.

No guns !—It was necessary to go and take them, to carry them off from the Invalides ; that was very hazardous. The *Hotel des Invalides* is, it is true, an open mansion ; but Sombreuil, the governor, a brave old soldier, had received a strong detachment of artillery and some cannon, without counting those he had already. Should those cannon be brought to act, the crowd might be taken in the flank, and easily dispersed by the regiments that Besenval had at the military school.

Would those foreign regiments have refused to act ? In spite of what Besenval says to the contrary, there is reason to doubt it. What is much plainer, is, that being left without orders, he was himself full of hesitation, and appeared paralysed in mind. At five o'clock that same morning, he had received a strange visit ;—a man rushed in ; his countenance was livid, his eyes flashed fire, his language was impetuous and brief, and

\* This fact is related by a witness above suspicion, Count de Ségur, ambassador at the court of Russia, who was far from sharing that enthusiasm : “ This madness which I can hardly believe whilst relating it,” &c. Ségur, *Mémoires* iii., p. 508.



his manner audacious. The old coxcomb, who was the most frivolous officer of the *ancien régime*, but brave and collected, gazed at the man, and was struck with admiration. "Baron," said the man, "I come to advise you to make no resistance; the barriers will be burnt to-day;\* I am sure of it, but cannot prevent it; neither can you—do not try."

Besenal was not afraid; but he had, nevertheless, felt the shock, and suffered its moral effect. "There was something eloquent in that man," says he, "that struck me; I ought to have had him arrested, and yet I did not." It was the *ancien régime* and the Revolution meeting face to face, and the latter left the former lost in astonishment.

Before nine o'clock thirty thousand men were in front of the Invalides; the Attorney General of the City was at their head: the committee of the electors had not dared to refuse him. Among them were seen a few companies of the French Guards, who had escaped from their barracks, the Clerks of the Basoche, in their old red dresses, and the Curate of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, who, being named president of the Assembly formed in his church, did not decline the perilous office of heading this armed multitude.

Old Sombreuil acted very adroitly. He showed himself at the gate, said it was true he had guns, but that they had been intrusted to him as a deposit, and that his honour, as a soldier and a gentleman, did not allow him to be a traitor.

This unexpected argument stopped the crowd at once; a proof of the admirable candour of the people in that early age of the Revolution. Sombreuil added, that he had sent a courier to Versailles, and was expecting the answer; backing all this with numerous protestations of attachment and friendship for the Hôtel-de-Ville and the city in general.

The majority was willing to wait. Luckily, there was one man present who was less scrupulous, and prevented the crowd from being so easily mystified.†

\* By these words we perceive that at five o'clock, no plan had been formed. The man in question, who was not one of the people, repeated, apparently, the rumours of the Palais Royal.—The Utopians had long been talking of the utility of destroying the Bastille, forming plans, &c.; but the heroic, wild idea of taking it in one day, could be conceived only by the people.

† One of the assembled citizens. *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 300.



“There is no time to be lost,” said he, “and whose arms are these but the nation’s?” Then they leaped into the trenches, and the Hôtel was invaded; twenty-eight thousand muskets were found in the cellars, and carried off, together with twenty pieces of cannon.

All this between nine and eleven o’clock; but, let us hasten to the Bastille.

The governor, De Launey, had been under arms ever since two o’clock in the morning of the 13th; no precaution had been neglected; besides his cannon on the towers, he had others from the arsenal, which he placed in the court, and loaded with grape-shot. He caused six cart-loads of paving-stones, cannon-balls, and old iron, to be carried to the tops of the towers, in order to crush his assailants.\* In the bottom loop-holes he had placed twelve large rampart guns, each of which carried a pound and a half of bullets. He kept below his trustiest soldiers, thirty-two Swiss, who had no scruple in firing upon Frenchmen. His eighty-two Invalids were mostly distributed in different posts, far from the gates, upon the towers. He had evacuated the outer buildings which covered the foot of the fortress.

On the 13th, nothing save curses bestowed on the Bastille by passers by.

On the 14th, about midnight, seven shots were fired at the sentinels upon the towers.—Alarm!—The governor ascends with staff, remains half-an-hour, listening to the distant murmuring of the town; finding all quiet he descends.

The next morning many people were about, and, from time to time, young men (from the Palais Royal, or others) were calling out that they must give them arms. They pay no attention to them. They hear and introduce the pacific deputation of the Hôtel-de-Ville, which, about ten o’clock, intreats the governor to withdraw his cannon, promising that if he does not fire, he shall not be attacked. He, willingly, accepts, having no orders to fire, and highly delighted, obliges the envoys to breakfast with him.

As they were leaving, a man arrives who speaks in a very different tone.

\* *Biographie Michaud*,—article *De Launey*, written from information furnished by his family.

A violent, bold man, unacquainted with human respect, fearless and pitiless, knowing neither obstacle nor delay, and bearing in his breast the passionate genius of the Revolution—he came to summon the Bastille.

Terror accompanied him. The Bastille was afraid; the governor, without knowing why, was troubled and stammered.

That man was Thuriot, a monster of ferocity, one of the race of Danton. We meet with him twice, in the beginning and at the end. And twice his words are deadly; he destroys the Bastille,\* and he kills Robespierre.

He was not to pass the bridge; the governor would not allow it; and yet he passed. From the first court, he marches to a second; another refusal; but he passes on, and crosses the second ditch by the draw-bridge. Behold him now in front of the enormous iron gate by which the third court was shut. This seemed a monstrous well rather than a court, its eight towers united together, forming its inside walls. Those frightful gigantic towers did not look towards the court, nor had they a single window. At their feet, in their shadow, was the prisoners' only walk. Lost at the bottom of the pit, and overwhelmed by those enormous masses, he could contemplate only the stern nudity of the walls. On one side only, had been placed a clock, between two figures of captives in chains, as if to fetter time itself, and make the slow succession of hours still more burdensome.

There were the loaded cannon, the garrison, and the staff. Thuriot was daunted by nothing. "Sir," said he to the governor, "I summon you, in the name of the people, in the name of honour, and of our native land, to withdraw your cannon, and surrender the Bastille."—Then, turning towards the garrison, he repeated the same words.

If M. De Launey had been a true soldier, he would not thus have introduced the envoy into the heart of the citadel; still less would he have let him address the garrison. But, it is very necessary to remark, that the officers of the Bastille were mostly officers by favour of the lieutenant of police; even those who had never seen service, wore the cross of Saint

\* He destroyed it in two ways. He introduced division and demoralization and when it was taken, it was he who proposed to have it demolished. He killed Robespierre, by refusing to let him speak, on the 9th thermidor. Thuriot was then president of the Convention.

Louis. All of them, from the governor down to the scullions, had bought their places, and turned them to the best advantage. The governor found means to add every year to his salary of sixty thousand francs, (£2400), a sum quite as large by his rapine. He supplied his establishment at the prisoners' expense ; he had reduced their supply of firewood, and made a profit on their wine,\* and their miserable furniture. What was most infamous and barbarous, was, that he let out to a gardener the little garden of the Bastille, over a bastion ; and, for that miserable profit, he had deprived the prisoners of that walk, as well as of that on the towers ; that is to say, of air and light.

That greedy, sordid soul had moreover good reason to be dispirited ; he felt he was known ; Linguet's terrible memoirs had rendered De Launey infamous throughout Europe. The Bastille was hated ; but the governor was personally detested. The furious imprecations of the people, which he heard, he appropriated to himself ; and he was full of anxiety and fear.

Thuriot's words acted differently on the Swiss and the French. The Swiss did not understand them ; their captain, M. de Flue, was resolved to hold out. But the Staff and the Invalids were much shaken ; those old soldiers, in habitual communication with the people of the faubourg, had no desire to fire upon them. Thus the garrison was divided ; what will these two parties do ? If they cannot agree, will they fire upon each other ?

The dispirited governor said, in an apologetical tone, what had just been agreed with the town. He swore, and made the garrison swear, that if they were not attacked they would not begin.

Thuriot did not stop there. He desired to ascend to the top of the towers, to see whether the cannon were really withdrawn. De Launey, who had been all this time repenting of having allowed him already to penetrate so far, refused ; but, being pressed by his officers, he ascended with Thuriot.

The cannon were drawn back and masked, but still pointed. The view from that height of a hundred and forty feet was

\* The governor had the privilege of ordering in a hundred pieces of wine free of duty. He sold that right to a tavern, and received from it vinegar to give to the prisoners ; Linguet, p. 86. See in *La Bastille Dévoilée*, the history of a rich prisoner, whom De Launey used to conduct, at night, to a female, whom he, De Launey, had kept, but would no longer pay.

immense and startling ; the streets and openings full of people, and all the garden of the arsenal crowded with armed men. But, on the other side, a black mass was advancing. It was the faubourg Saint Antoine.

The governor turned pale. He grasped Thuriot by the arm : “ What have you done ? You abuse your privilege as an envoy ! You have betrayed me ! ”

They were both standing on the brink, and De Launey had a sentinel on the tower. Everybody in the Bastille was bound by oath to the governor ; in his fortress, he was king and the law. He was still able to avenge himself.

But, on the contrary, it was Thuriot who made him afraid : “ Sir,” said he, “ one word more, and I swear to you that one of us two shall be hurled headlong into the moat ! ”\*

At the same moment, the sentinel approached, as frightened as the governor, and, addressing Thuriot : “ Pray, Sir,” said he, “ show yourself ; there is no time to lose ; they are marching forward. Not seeing you, they will attack us.” He leaned over through the battlements ; and the people seeing him alive, and standing boldly upon the tower, uttered deafening shouts of joy and approbation.

Thuriot descended with the governor, again crossed through the court, and addressing the garrison once more : “ I am going to give my report,” said he ; “ I hope the people will not refuse to furnish a citizen guard† to keep the Bastille with you.”

The people expected to enter the Bastille as soon as Thuriot came forth. When they saw him depart, to make his report to the Hôtel-de-Ville, they took him for a traitor, and threatened him. Their impatience was growing into fury. The crowd seized on three Invalids, and wanted to tear them to pieces. They also seized on a young lady whom they believed to be the governor’s daughter, and some wanted to burn her, if he refused to surrender. Others dragged her from them.

What will become of us, said they, if the Bastille be not taken before night ? The burly Santerre, a brewer, whom the faubourg had elected its commander, proposed to burn the

\* Account of M. Thuriot’s conduct, at the end of Dussaulx, *Courre des sept jours*, p. 408.—Compare the *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 310.

† This bold dignified language is related by the besieged. See their declaration at the end of Dussaulx, p. 449.

place by throwing into it poppy and spikenard oil\* that they had seized the night before, and which they could fire with phosphorus. He was sending to fetch the engines.

A blacksmith, an old soldier, without wasting time in idle talk, sets bravely to work. He marches forward, hatchet in hand, leaps upon the roof of a small guard-house, near the first drawbridge, and, under a shower of bullets, coolly plies his hatchet, cuts away, and loosens the chains; down falls the bridge. The crowd rush over it, and enter the court.

The firing began at once from the towers and from the loopholes below. The assailants fell in crowds, and did no harm to the garrison. Of all the shots they fired that day, two took effect: only one of the besieged was killed.

The committee of electors, who saw the wounded already arriving at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and deplored the shedding of blood, would have wished to stop it. There was now but one way of doing so, which was to summon the Bastille, in the name of the city, to surrender, and to allow the citizen-guard to enter. The provost hesitated for a long time; Fauchet insisted; † and other electors entreated him. They went as deputies; but in the fire and smoke, they were not even seen; neither the Bastille nor the people ceased firing. The deputies were in the greatest danger. A second deputation, headed by the city proctor, with a drum and a flag of truce, was perceived from the fortress. The soldiers who were upon the towers hoisted a white flag, and reversed their arms. The people ceased firing, followed the deputation, and entered the court. There, they were welcomed by a furious discharge, which brought down several men by the side of the deputies. Very probably the Swiss who were below with De Launey, paid no attention to the signs made by the Invalids. ‡

The rage of the people was inexpressible. Ever since the morning, it had been said that the governor had enticed the crowd into the court to fire upon them; they believed themselves twice deceived, and resolved to perish, or to be revenged

\* He himself boasts of this folly. *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 385.

† If we may believe him, he had the honour of being the first to propose it. Fauchet, *Discours sur la liberté prononcé le 6 Août 89 à Saint Jacques*, p. 11.

‡ This is the most satisfactory way of reconciling the apparently contradictory declarations of the besieged and of the deputation.



on the traitors. To those who were calling them back, they exclaimed in a transport of frenzy: "Our bodies at least shall serve to fill the moats!" And on they rushed obstinately and nothing daunted, amid a shower of bullets and against those murderous towers, as if, by dying in heaps, they could at length overthrow them.

But then, numbers of generous men, who had hitherto taken no part in the action, beheld, with increased indignation, such an unequal struggle, which was actual assassination. They wanted to lend their assistance. It was no longer possible to hold back the French Guards; they all sided with the people. They repaired to the commandants nominated by the town, and obliged them to surrender their five cannons. Two columns were formed, one of workmen and citizens, the other of French Guards. The former took for its chief a young man, of heroic stature and strength, named Hullin, a clockmaker of Geneva, but now a servant, being gamekeeper to the Marquis de Conflans; his Hungarian costume as a *chasseur* was doubtless taken for a uniform; and thus did the livery of servitude guide the people to the combat of liberty. The leader of the other column was Élie, an officer of fortune belonging to the Queen's regiment, who, changing his private dress for his brilliant uniform, showed himself bravely a conspicuous object to both friends and foes.

Among his soldiers, was one admirable for his valour, youth, and endurance, Mareau, one of the glories of France, who remained satisfied with fighting, and claimed no share in the honour of the victory.

Things were not very far advanced when they arrived. Three cart-loads of straw had been pushed forward and set on fire, and the barracks and kitchens had been burnt down. They knew not what else to do. The despair of the people was vented upon the Hôtel-de-Ville. They blamed the provost and the electors, and urged them, in threatening language, to issue formal orders for the siege of the Bastille. But they could never induce them to give those orders.

Several strange singular means were proposed to the electors for taking the fortress. A carpenter advised the erection of a Roman catapult, in wood-work, to hurl stones against the walls. The commanders of the town said it was necessary to attack in a regular way, and open a trench. During this long and



useless debate, a letter at that moment intercepted, was brought in and read ; it was from Besenval to de Launey, commanding him to hold out to the last extremity.

To appreciate the value of time at that momentous crisis, and understand the dread felt at any delay, we must know that there were false alarms every instant. It was supposed that the court, informed at two o'clock of the attack on the Bastille, which had begun at noon, would take that opportunity of pouring down its Swiss and German troops upon Paris. Again, would those at the Military School pass the day in inaction ? That was unlikely. What Besenval says about the little reliance he could place on his troops seems like an excuse. The Swiss showed themselves very firm at the Bastille, as appeared from the carnage ; the German dragoons had, on the 12th, fired several times, and killed some of the French Guards ; the latter had killed several dragoons ; a spirit of mutual hatred ensured fidelity.

In the faubourg Saint Honoré, the paving-stones were dug up, the attack being expected every moment ; La Villette was in the same state, and a regiment really came and occupied it, but too late.

Every appearance of dilatoriness appeared treason. The provost's shuffling conduct caused him to be suspected, as well as the electors. The exasperated crowd perceived it was losing time with them. An old man exclaimed : " Friends, why do we remain with these traitors ? Let us rather hasten to the Bastille ! " They all vanished. The electors, thunder-struck, found themselves alone. One of them goes out, but returns with a livid, spectral countenance : " You have not two minutes to live," says he, " if you remain here. La Grève is filled by a furious crowd. Here they are coming." They did not, however, attempt to fly ; and that saved their lives.

All the fury of the people was now concentrated on the provost. The envoys of the different districts came successively to accuse him of treachery to his face. A part of the electors, finding themselves compromised with the people, by his imprudence and falsehood, turned round and accused him. Others, the good old Dussaulx (the translator of Juvenal), and the intrepid Fauchet endeavoured to defend him, innocent or guilty, and to save him from death. Being forced by the people to remove from their bureau into the grand hall of Saint

Jean, they surrounded him, and Fauchet sat down by his side. The terrors of death were impressed on his countenance. "I saw him," says Dussaulx, "chewing his last mouthful of bread; it stuck in his teeth, and he kept it in his mouth two hours before he could swallow it." Surrounded with papers, letters, and people who came to speak to him on business, and amid shouts of death, he strove hard to reply with affability. The crowds of the Palais Royal and from the district of Saint Roch, being the most inveterate, Fauchet hastened to them to pray for pardon. The district body was assembled in the church of Saint Roch; twice did Fauchet ascend the pulpit, praying, weeping, and uttering the fervent language which his noble heart dictated in that hour of need; his robe, torn to tatters by the bullets of the Bastille,\* was eloquent also; it prayed for the people, for the honour of that great day, and that the cradle of liberty might be left pure and undefiled.

The provost and the electors remained in the hall of Saint Jean, between life and death, guns being levelled at them several times. All those who were present, says Dussaulx, were like savages; sometimes they would listen and look on in silence; sometimes a terrible murmur, like distant thunder, arose from the crowd. Many spoke and shouted; but the greater number seemed astounded by the novelty of the sight. The uproar, the exclamations, the news, the alarms, the intercepted letters, the discoveries, true or false, so many secrets revealed, so many men brought before the tribunal, perplexed the mind and reason. One of the electors exclaimed: "Is not doomsday come?" So dizzy, so confounded was the crowd, that they had forgotten everything, even the provost and the Bastille.†

It was half-past five when a shout arose from La Grève. An immense noise, like the growling of distant thunder, resounds nearer and nearer, rushing on with the rapidity and roaring of a tempest. The Bastille is taken.

That hall already so full is at once invaded by a thousand men, and ten thousand pushing behind. The wood-work cracks,

\* Fauchet, *Bouche de fer*, No. XVI., Nov. 90, t. iii., p. 244.

† The *Procès verbal* shows, however, that a new deputation was being prepared, and that De la Salle, the commandant, meant at length to take a part in the action.

the benches are thrown down, and the barrier driven upon the bureau, the bureau upon the president.

All were armed in a fantastical manner ; some almost naked, others dressed in every colour. One man was borne aloft upon their shoulders and crowned with laurel ; it was Élie, with all the spoils and prisoners around him. At the head, amid all that din, which would have drowned a clap of thunder, advanced a young man full of meditation and religion ; he carried suspended and pierced with his bayonet a vile, a thrice-accursed object,—the regulations of the Bastille.

The keys too were carried,—those monstrous, vile, ignoble keys, worn out by centuries and the sufferings of men. Chance or Providence directed that they should be intrusted to a man who knew them but too well,—a former prisoner. The National Assembly placed them in its Archives ; the old machine of tyrants thus lying beside the laws that had destroyed them. We still keep possession of those keys, in the iron safe of the Archives of France. Oh ! would that the same iron-chest might contain the keys of all the Bastilles in the world !

Correctly speaking, the Bastille was not taken ; it surrendered. Troubled by a bad conscience it went mad, and lost all presence of mind.

Some wanted to surrender ; others went on firing, especially the Swiss, who, for five hours, pointed out, aimed at, and brought down whomsoever they pleased, without any danger or even the chance of being hurt in return. They killed eighty-three men and wounded eighty-eight. Twenty of the slain were poor fathers of families, who left wives and children to die of hunger.

Shame for such cowardly warfare, and the horror of shedding French blood, which but little affected the Swiss, at length caused the Invalids to drop their arms. At four o'clock the subaltern officers begged and prayed De Launey to put an end to this massacre. He knew what he deserved ; obliged to die one way or other, he had, for a moment, the horribly ferocious idea of blowing up the citadel : he would have destroyed one-third of Paris. His hundred and thirty-five barrels of gunpowder would have blown the Bastille into the air, and shattered or buried the whole faubourg, all the Marais, and the whole of the quartier of the Arsenal. He seized a match

from a cannon. Two subaltern officers prevented the crime; they crossed their bayonets, and barred his passage to the magazines. He then made a show of killing himself, and seized a knife, which they snatched from him.

He had lost his senses and could give no orders.\* When the French Guards had ranged their cannon and fired (according to some), the captain of the Swiss saw plainly that it was necessary to come to terms; he wrote and passed a note,† in which he asked to be allowed to go forth with the honours of war. Refused. Next, that his life should be spared. Hulin and Élie promised it. The difficulty was to perform their promise. To prevent a revenge accumulating for ages, and now incensed by so many murders perpetrated by the Bastille, was beyond the power of man. An authority of an hour's existence, that had but just come from La Grève, and was known only to the two small bands of the vanguard, was not adequate to keep in order the hundred thousand men behind.

The crowd was enraged, blind, drunk with the very sense of their danger. And yet they killed but one man in the fortress. They spared their enemies the Swiss, whom their smock-frocks caused to pass for servants or prisoners; but they ill-treated and wounded their friends the Invalids. They wished to have annihilated the Bastille: they pelted and broke to pieces the two captives of the dial; they ran up to the top of the towers to spurn the cannon; several attacked the stones, and tore their hands in dragging them away. They hastened to the dungeons to deliver the prisoners: two had become mad. One, frightened by the noise, wanted to defend himself, and was quite astonished when those who had battered down his door threw themselves into his arms and bathed him with their tears. Another, whose beard reached to his waist, inquired about the health of Louis XV., believing him to be still reigning. To those who asked him his name, he replied that he was called the Major of Immensity.

The conquerors were not yet at the end of their labours: in

\* Even in the morning, according to Thuriot's testimony. See the *Procès-verbal des électeurs*.

† To fetch it, a plank was placed on the moat. The first who ventured, fell; the second (Arné?—or Maillard?) was more lucky and brought back the note

the Rue Saint Antoine they had to fight a battle of a different kind. On approaching La Grève, they came successfully on crowds of men, who, having been unable to take any part in the fight, wanted at all events to do something, were it merely to massacre the prisoners. One was killed at the Rue des Tournelles, and another on the quay. Women, with dishevelled hair, came rushing forward, and recognizing their husbands among the slain, left them to fly upon their assassins; one of them, foaming at the mouth, ran about asking everybody for a knife.

De Launey was conducted and supported in that extreme danger by two men of extraordinary courage and strength, Hullin, and another. The latter went with him as far as the Petit Antoine, but was there torn from his side by the rush of the crowd. Hullin held fast. To lead his man from that spot to La Grève, which is so near, was more than the twelve labours of Hereules. No longer knowing how to act, and perceiving that they knew De Launey only by his being alone without a hat, he conceived the heroic idea of putting his own upon his head; and, from that moment, he received the blows intended for the governor.\* At length, he passed the Arcade Saint Jean; if he could but get him on the flight of steps, and push him towards the stairs, all was over. The crowd saw that very plainly, and accordingly made a desperate onset. The Hereulean strength hitherto displayed by Hullin no longer served him here. Stifled by the pressure of the crowd around him, as in the crushing fold of an enormous boa, he lost his footing, was hurled to and fro, and thrown upon the pavement.

\* The royalist tradition which aspires to the difficult task of inspiring interest for the least interesting of men, has pretended that De Launey, still more heroic than Hullin, gave him his hat back again, wishing rather to die than expose him. The same tradition attributes the honour of a similar deed to Berthier, the intendant of Paris. Lastly, they relate that the major of the Bastille, on being recognized and defended at La Grève, by one of his former prisoners, whom he had treated with kindness, dismissed him, saying: "You will ruin yourself without saving me." This last story, being authentic, very probably gave rise to the two others. As for De Launey and Berthier, there is nothing in their previous conduct to incline us to believe in the heroism of their last moments. The silence of Miehaud, the biographer, in the article *De Launey*, drawn up from information furnished by that family, sufficiently shows that they did not believe in that tradition.



Twice he regained his feet. The second time he beheld aloft the head of De Launey at the end of a pike.

Another scene was passing in the hall of Saint Jean. The prisoners were there, in great danger of death. The people were especially inveterate towards three Invalids, whom they supposed to have been the cannoneers of the Bastille. One was wounded; De la Salle, the commandant, by incredible efforts, and proclaiming loudly his title of commandant, at last managed to save him; whilst he was leading him out, the two others were dragged out and hung up to the lamp at the corner of the Vannerie, facing the Hôtel-de-Ville.

All this great commotion, which seemed to have caused Flesselles to be forgotten, was nevertheless what caused his destruction. His implacable accusers of the Palais Royal, few in number, but discontented to see the crowd occupied with any other business, kept close to the bureau, menacing him, and summoning him to follow them. At length he yielded: whether the long expectation of death appeared to him worse than death itself, or that he hoped to escape in the universal pre-occupation about the great event of the day. "Well! gentlemen," said he, "let us go to the Palais Royal." He had not reached the quay before a young man shot him through the head with a pistol bullet.

The dense multitude crowding the hall did not wish for bloodshed; according to an eye-witness, they were stupefied on beholding it. They stared gaping at that strange, prodigious, grotesque, and maddening spectacle. Arms of the middle ages and of every age were mingled together; centuries had come back again. Elie, standing on a table, with a helmet on his brow, and a sword hacked in three places, in his hand, seemed a Roman warrior. He was entirely surrounded by prisoners, and pleading for them. The French Guards demanded the pardon of the prisoners as their reward.

At that moment, a man, followed by his wife, is brought or rather carried in; it was the Prince de Montbarrey, an ancient minister, arrested at the barrier. The lady fainted; her husband was thrown upon the bureau, held down by the arms of twelve men, and bent double. The poor man, in that strange posture, explained that he had not been minister for a long time, and that his son had taken a prominent part in the revo



lution of his province. De la Salle, the commandant, spoke for him, and exposed himself to great danger. Meanwhile, the people relented a little, and for a moment let go their hold. De la Salle, a very powerful man, caught him up, and carried him off. This trial of strength pleased the people, and was received with applause.

At the same moment, the brave and excellent Élie found means to put an end at once to every intention of trial or condemnation. He perceived the children of the Bastille, and began to shout : “ Pardon ! for the children, pardon ! ”

Then you might have seen sunburnt faces and hands blackened with gunpowder, washed with big tears, falling like heavy drops of rain after a shower. Justice and vengeance were thought of no longer. The tribunal was broken up ; for Élie had conquered the conquerors of the Bastille. They made the prisoners swear fidelity to the nation, and led them away ; the Invalids marched off in peace to their Hôtel ; the French Guards took charge of the Swiss, placed them in safety within their ranks, conducting them to their own barracks, and gave them lodging and food.

What was most admirable, the widows showed themselves equally magnanimous. Though needy, and burdened with children, they were unwilling to receive alone a small sum allotted to them ; they shared it with the widow of a poor Invalid who had prevented the Bastille from being blown up, but was killed by mistake. The wife of the besieged was thus adopted, as it were, by those of the besiegers.

## BOOK II.

JULY TO OCTOBER, 1789.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE HOLLOW TRUCE.

Versailles, on the 14th of July.—The King at the Assembly, July 15th.—Paris in Mourning and Misery.—Deputation of the Assembly to the City of Paris, July 15th.—Hollow Truce.—The King goes to Paris on the 17th of July.—First Emigration : Artois, Condé, Polignac, &c.—The King's isolated Position.

THE Assembly passed the whole of the 14th of July in a state of two-fold trepidation, between the violent measures of the Court, the fury of Paris, and the chances of an insurrection, which, if unsuccessful, would stifle liberty. They listened to every rumour, and with their ears anxiously open imagined they heard the faint thunder of a distant cannonade. That moment might be their last ; several members wished the bases of the constitution to be hastily established, that the Assembly, if it was to be dispersed and destroyed, should leave that testamentary evidence behind, as a beacon for the opponents of tyranny.

The Court was preparing the attack, and little was wanting for its execution. At two o'clock, Berthier, the intendant, was still at the military school, giving orders for the details of the attack. Foulon, his father-in-law, the under-minister of war, was at Versailles, completing the preparations. Paris was to be attacked, that night, on seven points simultaneously.\* The council was discussing the list of the deputies who were

\* Bailly, i., pp. 391, 392.

to be carried off that evening : one was proscribed, another excepted ; M. de Breteuil defended the innocence of Bailly. Meanwhile the queen and Madame de Polignac went into the *Orangerie* to encourage the troops and to order wine to be given to the soldiers, who were dancing about and singing roundelays. To complete the general intoxication, this lovely creature conducted the officers to her apartments, excited them with liqueurs, with sweet words and glances. Those madmen, once let loose, would have made a fearful night. Letters were intercepted, wherein they had written : “ We are marching against the enemy.” What enemy ? The law and France.

But see ! a cloud of dust is rising in the *Avenue de Paris*, it is a body of cavalry, with Prince de Lambesc and all his officers flying before the people of Paris. But he meets with those of Versailles : if they had not been afraid of wounding the others, they would have fired upon him.

De Noailles arrives, saying : “ The Bastille is taken.” De Wimpfen arrives : “ The governor is killed ; he saw the deed, and was nearly treated in the same way.” At last, two envoys of the electors come and acquaint the Assembly with the frightful state of Paris. The Assembly is furious, and invokes against the Court and the ministers the vengeance of God and men. “ Heads !” cried Mirabeau ; “ We must have De Broglic’s head !” \*

A deputation of the Assembly waits upon the king, but it can get from him only two equivocal expressions : he sends officers to take the command of the local militia, and orders the troops in the Champ-de-Mars to fall back. A movement very well devised for the general attack.

The Assembly is furious and clamorous ; it sends a second deputation. “ The king is heart-broken, but he can do no more.”

Louis XVI., whose weakness has been so often deplored, here made a show of deplorable firmness. Berthier had come to stay with him ; he was in his closet and comforted him,† telling him there was no great harm done. In the present troubled state of Paris, there was still every chance of the

\* Ferrières, i, p. 132.

† *Rapport d’Accusation, Hist. Parl.*, iv., p. 83.

grand attack in the evening. However, they soon discovered that the town was on its guard. It had already placed cannon on Montmartre, which covered La Villette, and kept Saint-Denis in check.

Amid the contradictory reports, the king gave no orders; and, faithful to his usual habits, retired to rest at an early hour. The Duke de Liancourt, whose duties gave him the privilege of entering at any hour, even in the night, could not see him perish thus in his apathy and ignorance. He entered, and awoke him. He loved the king, and wanted to save him. He told him the extent of his danger, the importance of the movement, its irresistible force; that he ought to meet it, get the start of the Duke of Orleans, and secure the friendship of the Assembly. Louis XVI., half asleep (and who was never entirely awake): "What then," said he, "is it a revolt?" "Sire, it is a Revolution."

The king concealed nothing from the queen; so everything was known in the apartment of the Count d'Artois. His followers were much alarmed; royalty might save itself at their expense. One of them, who knew the prince, and that fear was the weak point in his character, secured him by saying that he was proscribed at the Palais Royal, like Flesselles and De Lanney, and that he might tranquillise every mind by uniting with the king in the popular measure dictated by necessity. The same man, who was a deputy, ran to the Assembly (it was then midnight); he there found the worthy Bailly, who durst not retire to rest, and asked him, in the name of the prince, for a speech that the king might read on the morrow.

There was one man at Versailles who grieved as much as any. I mean the Duke of Orleans. On the 12th of July, his effigy had been carried in triumph, and then brutally broken to pieces. There the matter rested; nobody had cared about it. On the 13th, a few had spoken of the election of a lieutenant-general, but the crowd seemed deaf, and either did not, or would not, hear. On the morning of the 14th, Madame de Genlis took the daring and incredible step of sending her Pamela with a lackey in red livery into the middle of the riot.\*

\* Madame Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, i., p. 189

Somebody exclaimed: "Why it is not the queen!" And those words died away. All their petty intrigues were swamped in that immense commotion, every paltry interest was smothered in the excitement of that sacred day.

The poor Duke of Orleans went on the morning of the 15th to the council at the castle. But he had to stay at the door. He waited; then wrote; not to demand the lieutenancy-general, not to offer his mediation (as had been agreed between him, Mirabeau, and a few others), but to assure the king, as a good and loyal subject, that if matters grew worse, he would go over to England.

He did not stir all day from the Assembly, or from Versailles, and went to the castle in the evening;\* he thus made good an *alibi* against every accusation of being an accomplice, and washed his hands of the taking of the Bastille. Mirabeau was furious, and left him from that moment. He said (I soften the expression): "He is an eunuch for crime; he would, but cannot!"

Whilst the duke was being kept waiting like a petitioner at the council door, Sillery-Genlis, his warm partisan, was striving to avenge him; he read, and caused to be adopted, an insidious project of address, calculated to diminish the effect of the king's visit, deprive it of the merit of being spontaneous, and chill, beforehand, every heart: "Come, sire, your majesty will see the consternation of the Assembly, but you will be perhaps astonished at its calmness," &c. And, at the same time, he announced that loads of flour going to Paris had been stopped at Sèvres. "What if this news reached the capital!"

To which, Mirabeau, addressing the deputies whom they were sending to the king, added these alarming words: "Go, and tell the king that the foreign hordes by which we are invested, were visited yesterday by the princes and princesses, by his male and female favourites, who lavished on them their caresses, presents, and exhortations. Tell him that all right long, those foreign satellites, gorged with wine and gold, have predicted, in their impious songs, the servitude of France, and that their brutal vows have invoked the destruction of the National Assembly. Tell him that in his very palace, his

\* Ferrières, i., p. 135. Droz, ii, p. 342

courtiers danced to the sounds of that barbarous music, and that such was the prelude to the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Tell him that king Henry, whose memory is adored by the universe, that ancestor of his whom he affected to wish to take as his model, ordered provisions to be sent into revolted Paris, which he was besieging in person ; whilst his ferocious counsellors have driven back the corn which commerce was bringing to his starving but faithful Paris."

As the deputation was departing, the king arrives. He enters without his guards, accompanied only by his brothers. He advances a few paces into the hall, and, standing in front of the Assembly, announces that he has given orders to the troops to remove *from Paris and Versailles*, and he engages the Assembly to give this information to Paris. A sad confession that his own word will obtain little credit unless the Assembly affirmed that the king has not told a lie ! He added, however, more nobly and adroitly : " People have dared to spread a report that your persons are not in safety. Can it be necessary to reassure you against such wicked rumours, already belied by my well-known character ? Well then, I, who am but one with the nation, I come to intrust myself to you ! "

To remove the troops from Paris and Versailles, without stating any distance, was yet but an equivocal, uncertain promise, that gave but little comfort. But the Assembly were generally so alarmed at the obscure immensity opening before them, so stupefied by the victory of Paris, and had so much need of order, that they showed themselves credulous, enthusiastic for the king, even so far as to forget what they owed to themselves.

They all rushed round him and followed him. He returned on foot. The Assembly and the people crowded about him to suffocation ; the king, who was very corpulent, was quite exhausted in crossing the Place d'Armes in such scorching weather ; deputies, among whom was the Duke of Orleans, formed a circle around him. On his arrival, the Swiss band played the air : "*Où peut on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille ?*" A family too limited in number : the people formed no part of it ; the gates being shut against them. The king gave orders to open them again. However, he declined to receive the deputies who wished to see him once more ; he



was going to his chapel to return thanks to God.\* The queen appeared in the balcony with her children, and those of the Count d'Artois, with all the appearance of great delight, and hardly knowing what to think of an enthusiasm so ill deserved.

Versailles was overcome with joy. Paris, in spite of its victory, was still in alarm and affliction. It was burying its dead; many of them had left families without resource. Such as had no family received the last duties from their companions. They had placed a hat beside one of the dead, and said to passengers: "Sir, something for this poor fellow who was killed for the nation! Madam, it is for this poor fellow who was killed for the nation!"† An humble and simple funeral oration for men whose death gave life to France.

Everybody was guarding Paris; nobody was working. There was no work; food was scarce and dear. The Hôtel-de-Ville maintained that Paris had provision enough for a fortnight; but it had not enough for three days. It was necessary to order a tax for the subsistence of the poor. The supplies of flour had been stopped at Sèvres and Saint-Denis. Two fresh regiments arrived while they were promising to send back the troops. The hussars came and reconnoitered the barriers; and a report was spread that they had attempted to surprise the Bastille. At length the alarm was so great, that, at two o'clock, the electors could not refuse the people an order to unpace Paris.

At two o'clock precisely, a man arrives breathless and almost fainting.‡ He had run all the way from Sèvres, where the troops wanted to stop him. "It is all over; the Revolution is finished; the king came into the Assembly, and said: 'I trust myself to you.' A hundred deputies are now on their road from Versailles, sent by the Assembly to the city of Paris."

Those deputies had immediately set forth; Bailly would not dine. The electors had barely the time to run to meet them, just as they were, in disorder, not having been to bed for several nights. They wanted to fire the cannon; but they were still ranged *en batterie*, and could not be got ready.

\* *Point du Jour*, No. 35, t. i., p. 207.

† *Lettres écrites de France à un Ami*, p. 29, quoted in Dussaulx's Notes, p. 333.

‡ *Procès-verbal des Electeurs, rédigé par Duveyrier*, i., p. 431.

There was no need of them to solemnise the *fête*. Paris was grand enough with its sun of July, its commotion, and all that population in arms. The hundred deputies, preceded by the French Guards, the Swiss, the officers of the city militia, and by the deputies of the electors, marched up the Rue Saint Honoré to the sound of trumpets. Every arm was stretched towards them, and every heart leaped with joy. From every window were showered flowers, blessings, and tears.

The National Assembly and the people of Paris, the oath of the Jeu-de-Paume and the taking of the Bastille ; victory and victory, kissed each other.

Several deputies kissed and wept over the flags of the French Guards : “Flags of our native land !” cried they, “flags of liberty !”

On their arrival at the Hôtel-de-Ville, Lafayette, Bailly, the archbishop of Paris, Sieyès, and Clermont-Tonnerre were made to sit at the bureau. Lafayette spoke coolly and prudently ; next, Lally Tollendal with his Irish impetuosity and easy tears. It was at that same Grève that Lally’s father, thirty years before, had been gagged and beheaded by the *ancien régime* ; his speech, full of emotion, was nothing but a sort of amnesty for the *ancien régime*, an amnesty certainly too premature, whilst it still kept Paris surrounded by troops.

Emotion nevertheless took effect also in the citizen assembly of the Hôtel-de-Ville. “The fattest of tender-hearted men,” as Lally was called, was crowned with flowers, and led, or rather carried, to the window, and shown to the crowd. Resisting as much as he could, he put his crown on the head of Bailly, the first president the National Assembly had. Bailly likewise refused ; but it was held and fastened on his head by the hand of the archbishop of Paris. A strange and whimsical spectacle, which showed, in a strong light, the false position of the parties. Here was the president of the Jeu-de-Paume, crowned by the prelate, who advised the *coup d’état*, and forced Paris to conquer. The contradiction was so little perceived, that the archbishop did not fear to propose a *Te Deum*, and everybody followed him to Nôtre Dame. It was rather a *De Profundis* that he first owed to those whose deaths he had occasioned.

Notwithstanding the general emotion, the people remained

in their senses. They did not tamely allow their victory to be meddled with ; that, we must say, was neither fair nor useful ; that victory was not yet sufficiently complete to sacrifice and forget it so soon. Its moral effect was immense, but its material result still feeble and uncertain. Even in the Rue Saint Honoré, the citizen guard (then it was all the people) brought before the deputies, with military music, that French Guardsman who had been the first to arrest the governor of the Bastille ; he was led in triumph in De Launey's chariot, crowned with laurel, and wearing the cross of Saint Louis, which the people had snatched from the gaoler to put upon his conqueror. He was unwilling to keep it ; however, before he gave it back, in presence of the deputies, he adorned himself with it, proudly showing it upon his breast.\* The crowd applauded, and so did the deputies, thus sanctioning with their approbation what had been done the day before.

Another incident was still clearer. Among the speeches made at the Hôtel-de-Ville, M. De Liancourt, a good-natured, but inconsiderate man, said that the king willingly *pardoned* the French Guards. Several of them, then present, stepped forward, and one of them exclaimed : " We need no pardon. In serving the nation, we serve the king ; the intentions which he displays to-day prove sufficiently to France that we alone have been faithful to the king and the country."

Bailly is proclaimed mayor, and Lafayette commandant of the citizen militia. They depart for the Te Deum. The archbishop gave his arm to that brave *abbé* Lefebvre who had guarded and distributed the gunpowder, who left that den for the first time, and was still quite black. Bailly was, in like manner, conducted by Hullin, applauded by the crowd, pressed, and almost stifled. Four fusileers followed him ; but, notwithstanding the rejoicings of that day and the unexpected honour of his new position, he could not help thinking " that he looked

\* Camille Desmoulins, so amusing here and everywhere else, triumphed also in his manner : " I marched with my sword drawn," &c., (*Correspondance*, p. 28, 1836). He took a fine gun with a bayonet and a pair of pistols from the Invalids ; if he did not make use of them, it is because unfortunately the Bastille was taken so quickly ! He ran there, but it was too late. Several go so far as to say, that it was he who caused the Revolution (p. 33) ; for his part, he is too modest to believe it.

like a man being led to prison." Had he been able to foresee better, he would have said to death!

What was that *Te Deum*, but a falsehood? Who could believe that the archbishop thanked God heartily for the taking of the Bastille? Nothing had changed, neither men nor principles. The court was still the court, the enemy ever the enemy. What had been done was done. Neither the National Assembly nor the electors of Paris, with all their omnipotence, could alter the past. On the 14th of July, there had been a person conquered, who was the king, and the conqueror was the people. How then were they to undo that, cause that not to be, blot out history, change the reality of actual events, and dupe the king and the people, in such a manner that the former should consider himself happy in being beaten, and the latter, without distrust, should give themselves up again into the hands of a master so cruelly provoked?

Mounier, whilst relating on the 16th, in the National Assembly, the visit of the hundred deputies to the city of Paris, made the strange proposal (resumed on the morrow and voted at the *Hôtel-de-Ville*) to raise a statue to Louis XVI. on the site of the demolished Bastille. A statue for a defeat! that was something new and original. The ridicule of it was apparent. Who was to be thus deceived? Was the victory indeed to be conjured away by thus allowing the vanquished to triumph?

The obstinacy of the king throughout the whole of the 14th of July, made the most simple perceive that his conduct on the 15th was by no means spontaneous. At the very moment the Assembly was conducting him back to the castle, amid this enthusiasm, feigned or real, a woman fell at his knees, and was not afraid to say: "Oh! Sire, are you really sincere? Will they not make you change?"

The population of Paris was full of gloomy ideas. They could not believe that with forty thousand men about Versailles, the court would make no attempt. They believed the king's conduct to be only intended to lull them into security, in order to attack with greater advantage. They distrusted the electors; two of the latter, deputed to Versailles on the 15th, were brought back, menaced as traitors, and in great danger. The French Guards were afraid of some ambush in their barracks, and refused to return to them. The people persisted in believing,

that if the court durst not fight, it would be revenged by some dark plot, that it might have somewhere a mine to blow Paris into the air.

Fear was not ridiculous, but confidence most certainly was. Why should they have felt secure? The troops, in spite of the promise, did not withdraw. The baron de Falekenheim, who commanded at Saint-Denis, said he had no orders. Two of his officers who had come to reconnoitre, had been arrested at the barrier. What was still more serious, was, that the lieutenant of police had given in his resignation. Berthier the intendant had absconded, and with him, all the persons charged with the administration of provisions. In a day or two, perhaps, the market would be without corn, and the people would go to the Hôtel-de-Ville to demand bread and the heads of the magistrates. The electors sent several of their body to fetch corn from Senlis, Vernon, and even from Hâvre.

Paris was waiting for the king. It thought that if he had spoken candidly and from his heart, he would leave his Versailles and his wicked advisers, and cast himself into the arms of the people. Nothing would have been better timed, or have had a greater effect on the 15th:—he should have departed for Paris, on leaving the Assembly, and have trusted himself, not in words only, but truly, and with his person, boldly entering the crowd, and mingling with that armed population. The emotion, still so great, would have turned entirely in his favour.

That is what the people expected, what they believed and talked of. They said so at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and repeated it in the streets. The king hesitated, consulted, postponed for one day, and all was lost.

Where did he pass that irreparable day? From the evening of the 15th to the morning of the 16th, he was still shut up with those same ministers, whose audacious folly had filled Paris with bloodshed, and shaken the throne for ever. At that council, the queen wanted to fly, carry off the king, put him at the head of the troops, and begin a civil war. But, were the troops very sure? What would happen if war broke out in the army itself, between the French soldiers and the foreign mercenaries? Was it not better to temporise, gain time, and amuse the people? Louis XVI., between these two opinions,



had none of his own,—no will;\* he was ready to follow either indifferently. The majority of the council were for the latter opinion ; so the king remained.

A mayor and a commandant of Paris appointed by the electors without the king's consent, those places accepted by men of such importance as Bailly and Lafayette, and their nominations confirmed by the Assembly, without asking the king for any permission, was no longer an insurrection, but a well and duly organized Revolution. Lafayette, "not doubting but all the *communes* would be willing to intrust their defence to armed citizens," proposed to call the citizen militia *National Guards* (a name already invented by Sieyès). This name seemed to generalize, and extend the arming of Paris to all the kingdom, even as the blue and red cockade of the city, augmented with white, the old French colours, became that of all France.

If the king remained at Versailles, if he delayed, he risked Paris. Its attitude was becoming more hostile every moment. On the districts being engaged to join their deputies to those of the Hôtel-de-Ville, in order to go and thank the king, several replied, "There was no occasion yet to return thanks."

It was not till the evening of the 16th, that Bailly having happened to see Vicq d'Azir, the queen's physician, gave him notice that the city of Paris wished for and expected the king. The king promised to go, and the same evening wrote to M. Necker to engage him to return.

On the 17th, the king departed at nine o'clock, very serious, melancholy, and pale ; he had heard mass, taken the communion, and given to *Monsieur* his nomination as lieutenant-general, in case he was killed or detained prisoner ; the queen, in his absence, wrote, with a trembling hand, the speech she would go and pronounce at the Assembly, if the king should be detained.

Without guards, but surrounded by three or four hundred deputies, he arrived at the (city) barrier at three o'clock. The mayor, on presenting him the keys, said : "These are the same keys that were presented to Henri IV. ; he had re-

\* The *Histoire Parlementaire* is wrong in quoting a pretended letter from Louis XVI. to the Count d'Artois (v. ii., p. 101), an apocryphal and ridiculous letter, like most of those published by Miss Williams, in the *Correspondance inédite*, so well criticised and condemned by MM. Barbier and Beuchôt.



conquered his people, now the people have re-conquered their king."

Those last words, so true and so strong, the full meaning of which was not perceived, even by Bailly, were enthusiastically applauded.

The Place Louis XV. presented a circle of troops, with the French Guards, drawn up in a square battalion, in the centre. The battalion opened and formed into file, displaying cannon in the midst (perhaps those of the Bastille). It put itself at the head of the procession, dragging its cannon after it—and the king followed.

In front of the king's carriage rode Lafayette, the commandant, in a private dress, sword in hand, with the cockade and plume in his hat. Everything was obedient to his slightest gesture. There was complete order and silence too; not one cry of *Vive le Roi*.<sup>\*</sup> Now and then, they cried *Vive la Nation*. From the *Point-du-Jour* to Paris, and from the barrier to the Hôtel-de-Ville, there were two hundred thousand men under arms, more than thirty thousand guns, fifty thousand pikes, and, for the others, lances, sabres, swords, pitchforks, and scythes. No uniforms, but two regular lines, throughout that immense extent, of three, and sometimes of four or five men deep.

A formidable apparition of the nation in arms! The king could not misunderstand it; it was not a party. Amid so many weapons and so many different dresses, there was the same soul and the same silence!

Everybody was there; all had wanted to come; nobody was missing at that solemn review. Even ladies were seen armed beside their husbands, and girls with their fathers. A woman figured among the conquerors of the Bastille.

Monks, believing also that they were men and citizens, had come to take their part in that grand crusade. The Mathurins were in their ranks under the banner of their order, now become

<sup>\*</sup> Save one mishap; one gun went off, and a woman was killed. There was no bad intention towards the king. Everybody was royalist, both the Assembly and the people: even Marat was till 1791. In an unpublished letter of Robespierre's (which M. De George communicated to me at Arras), he seems to believe in the good faith of Louis XVI., whose visit to the city of Paris is therein related, (23rd of July, 1789).

the standard of the district of that name. Capucins were there shouldering the sword or the musket. The *ladies of the Place-Maubert* had put the revolution of Paris under the protection of Saint Geneviève, and offered on the preceding evening a picture wherein the saint was encouraging the destroying angel to overthrow the Bastille, which was seen falling to pieces with broken crowns and sceptres.

Two men only were applauded, Bailly and Lafayette, and no others. The deputies marched surrounding the king's carriage, with sorrowful, uneasy looks; there was something gloomy about that procession. Those strange looking weapons, those pitch-forks and scythes, were not pleasing to the eye. Those cannon reclining so quietly in the streets, silent, and bedecked with flowers, seemed as though they would awake. Above all the apparent signs of peace hovered a conspicuous and significant image of war,—the tattered flag of the Bastille.

The king alights, and Bailly presents to him the new cockade of the colours of the city, which had become those of France. He begs of him to accept "that distinguishing symbol of Frenchmen." The king put it in his hat, and, separated from his suite by the crowd, ascended the gloomy stairs of the Hôtel-de-Ville. Over head, swords placed crosswise formed a canopy of steel; a singular honour, borrowed from the masonic customs, which seemed to have a double meaning, and might lead to suppose that the king was passing under the yoke.

There was no intention to cause either humiliation or displeasure. On the contrary, he was received with extraordinary emotion. The great hall, crowded with a confused mass of notables and men of every class, presented a strange spectacle; those in the middle remained kneeling, in order not to deprive the others of the happiness of seeing the king, and all had their hands raised towards the throne, and their eyes full of tears.

Bailly, in his speech, had pronounced the word *alliance* between the king and the people. The president of the electors, Moreau de Saint Méry (he who had been chairman during the great days, and given three thousand orders in thirty hours) ventured a word that seemed to engage the king: "You *come to promise* your subjects that the authors of those disastrous councils shall surround you no longer, and that Virtue, too long exiled, shall remain your support." Virtue meant Necker.

The king, from timidity or prudence, said nothing. The city proctor then made a proposal to raise a statue on the Place de la Bastille ; it was voted unanimously.

Next, Lally, always eloquent, only too tender-hearted and lachrymose, avowed the king's *chagrin*, and the need he had of *consolation*. This was showing him as conquered, instead of associating him with the victory of the people over the ministers who were departing. " Well, eitizens, are you satisfied ! Behold the king," &c. That *Behold*, thrice repeated, seemed like a sad parody of *Eece Homo*.

Those who had noticed that similitude found it exact and complete, when Bailly showed the king at the window of the Hôtel-de-Ville, with the cockade in his hat. He remained there a quarter of an hour, serious and silent. On his departure it was intimated to him, in a whisper, that he ought to say something himself. But all they could get from him was the ratification of the citizen guard, the mayor, and the commandant, and the very laconic sentence : " You may always rely on my affection."

The electors were satisfied, but not so the people. They had imagined that the king, rid of his bad advisers, had come to fraternize with the city of Paris. But, what ! not one word, not one gesture ! Nevertheless, the crowd applauded on his return ; they seemed to desire to give vent at length to their long restrained feelings. Every weapon was reversed in sign of peace. They shouted *Vive le Roi*, and he was carried to his carriage. A market-woman flung her arms round his neck. Men with bottles stopped his horses, poured out wine for his coachman and valets, and drank with them the health of the king. He smiled, but still said nothing. The least kind word, uttered at that moment, would have been re-echoed and celebrated with immense effect.

It was past nine in the evening when he returned to the castle. On the staircase he found the queen and his children in tears, who came and threw themselves into his arms. Had the king then incurred some alarming danger in going to visit his people ? Was his people his enemy ? Why what more would they have done for a king set at liberty, for John or Francis I., returning from London or Madrid ?

On the same day, Friday, the 17th, as if to protest that the

king neither said nor did anything at Paris but by force and constraint, his brother the Count d'Artois, the Condés, the Contis, the Polignacs, Vaudreuil, Broglie, Lambesc, and others, absconded from France. It was no easy matter. They found everywhere their names held in detestation, and the people rising against them. The Polignacs and Vaudreuils were only able to escape by declaiming along their road against Vaudreuil and Polignac.

The conspiracy of the court, aggravated with a thousand popular accounts, both strange and horrible, had seized upon every imagination, and rendered them incurably suspicious and distrustful. Versailles, excited at least as much as Paris, watched the castle night and day as the centre of treason. That immense palace seemed a desert. Many durst no longer enter it. The north wing, appropriated to the Condés, was almost empty; the south wing, that of the Count d'Artois, and the seven vast apartments of the ladies Polignac were shut up for ever. Several of the king's servants would have liked to forsake their master. They were beginning to entertain strange ideas about him.

For three days, says Besenval, the king had scarcely anybody about him but M. de Montmorin and myself. On the 19th, every minister being absent, I had entered the king's apartment to ask him to sign an order to have horses given to a colonel who was returning. As I was presenting that order a footman placed himself between the king and me, in order to see what he was writing. The king turned round, perceived the insolent fellow, and snatched up the tongs. I prevented him from following that impulse of very natural indignation; he clasped my hand to thank me, and I perceived tears in his eyes.

## CHAPTER II.

## POPULAR JUDGMENTS.

No Power inspires Confidence.—The Judiciary Power has lost Confidence.—The Breton Club.—Advocates, the Basoche.—Danton and Camille Desmoulins.—Barbarity of the Laws, and of the Punishments.—Judgments of the Palais Royal.—La Grève and Famine.—Death of Foulon and Berthier, July 22, 1789.

ROYALTY remains alone. The privileged class go into exile or submit ; they declare they will henceforth vote in the National Assembly and be subject to the majority. Being isolated and laid bare, royalty appears what it had been fundamentally for a long time : a nonentity.

That nonentity was the ancient faith of France ; and that faith deceived now causes her distrust and incredulity ; it makes her excessively uneasy and suspicious. To have believed and loved, and to have been for a century always deceived in that love, is enough to make her no longer believe in anything.

Where will faith be now ? At that question, they experience a feeling of terror and solitude, like Louis XVI. himself in the corner of his lonely palace. There will no longer be faith in any mortal power.

The legislative power itself, that Assembly beloved by France, is now so unfortunate as to have absorbed its enemies, five or six hundred nobles and priests, and to contain them in its bosom. Another evil is, that it has conquered too much ; it will now be the authority, the government, the king—when a king is no longer possible.

The electoral power, which likewise found itself obliged to govern, feels itself expiring at the end of a few days, and entreats the districts to create its successor. During the cannonade of the Bastille, it had shuddered and doubted. Men of little faith ! But perfidious ? No. That *bourgeoisie* of '89, imbued with the philosophy of that grand age, was certainly less egotistical than our own. It was wavering and uncertain, bold in principle, but timid in application ; it had been so long in bondage !

It is the virtue of the judiciary power, when it remains entire and strong, to supply every other ; but itself is supplied by none. It was the mainstay and the resource of our ancient France, in her most terrible moments. In the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, it sat immutable and firm, so that the country, almost lost in the tempest, recovered and found itself still in the inviolable sanctuary of civil justice.

Well! even that power is shattered. Shattered by its inconsistency and contradictions. Servile and bold at once, for the king and against the king, for the pope and against the pope, the defender of the law and the champion of privilege, it speaks of liberty and resists for a century every liberal progress. It also, and as much as the king, deceived the hope of the people. What joy, what enthusiasm, when the parliament returned from exile, on the accession of Louis XVI. ! And it was in answer to that confidence that it joined the privileged class, stopped all reform, and caused Target to be dismissed ! In 1787, the people sustained it still, and, by way of recompense, the Parliament demanded that the States-General should be restored in imitation of the old form of 1614, that is to say useless, powerless, and derisive.

No, the people cannot confide in the judiciary power.

What is most strange, is, that it was this power, the guardian of order and the laws, that began the riot. Disturbances first begin about the Parliament, at every *lit de justice*. They were encouraged by the smiles of the magistrate. Young counsellors, such as d'Esprémesnil or Duport, mindful of the *Fronde*, would willingly have imitated Broussel and the Coadjutor. The organised Basoche furnishes an army of clerks. It has its king, its judgments, its provosts, old students, as was Moreau at Rennes, or brilliant orators and duellists, like Barnave at Grenoble. The solemn prohibition that the clerks should not wear a sword, did but make them the more pugnacious.

The first club was the one opened by counsellor Duport at his house in the Rue du Chaume in the Marais. There he assembled the most forward of the Parliament people, advocates and deputies, especially the Bretons. The club being transferred to Versailles, was called the *Breton Club*. On its return to Paris with the Assembly, and changing its character, it took up its quarters at the convent of the Jacobins.



Mirabeau went but once to Duport's; he used to call Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, the *Triumvireusat*.\* Sieyès also went, but would not return there. "It is a den of political banditti," said he; they take outrages for expedients." Elsewhere he designates them still more harshly: "One may imagine them to be a set of wicked blackguards, ever in action, shouting, intriguing, and rioting lawlessly, recklessly, and then laughing at the mischief they had done. To them may be attributed the greater part of the errors of the Revolution. Happy would it have been for France, if the subaltern agents of those early perturbators, on becoming leaders in their turn, by a sort of customary hereditary right in long revolutions, had renounced the spirit by which they had been so long agitated!"

These subalterns alluded to by Sieyès, who will succeed their leaders (and who were far superior to them), were especially two men,—two revolutionary levers, Camille Desmoulins and Danton. Those two men, one the king of pamphleteers, the other the thundering orator of the Palais Royal, before he was that of the Convention, cannot be further mentioned in this place. Besides, they are about to follow us, and will soon never leave us. In them, or in nobody, are personified the comedy and tragedy of the Revolution.

Presently they will let their masters form the club of the Jacobins, and will go and found the *Cordeliers*. At the present, all is mingled together: the grand club of a hundred clubs, among the *cafés*, the gaming-houses, and women, is still the Palais Royal. There it was that on the 12th of July, Desmoulins cried: To arms! And there, on the night of the 13th, sentence was passed on Flesselles and De Launey. Those passed on the Count D'Artois, the Condés and the Polignacs, were forwarded to them; and they had the astonishing effect, hardly to be expected from several battles, of making them depart from France. Hence arose a fatal predilection for the means of terror which had so well succeeded. Desmoulins, in the speech which he attributes to the lamp (lanterne) of La Grève, makes it say, "That strangers gaze upon it in an ecstasy of astonishment; that they wonder that a lamp should

\* Meaning the Three Knaves,—a parody, of course, on triumvirate.—C. C.

have done more in two days than all their heroes in a hundred years."\*

Desmoulins renews ever with inexhaustible wit the old jokes that filled all the middle ages on the gallows, the rope, and the persons hung. That hideous, atrocious punishment, which renders agony visible, was the usual text of the most joyous stories, the amusement of the vulgar, the inspiration of the Basoche. This found all its genius in Camille Desmoulins. That young lawyer of Picardy, with a very light purse and a still lighter character, was loitering briefless at the *Palais*, when the Revolution made him suddenly plead at the *Palais Royal*. A slight impediment in his speech did but render him the more amusing. His lively sallies playing about his embarrassed lips, escaped like darts. He followed his comic humour without much considering whether it might not end in tragedy. The famous judgments of the Basoche, those judicial farces which had so much amused the old *Palais*, were not more merry than the judgments of the *Palais Royal*; † the difference was that the latter were often executed in La Grève (the place of execution).

What is most strange, and a subject for reflection, is, that Desmoulins, with his roguish genius and mortal jests, and that bull of a Danton, who bellows murder, are the very men who, four years later, perish for having proposed *The Committee of Clemency*!

Mirabeau, Duport, the Lameths, and many others more moderate, approved of the acts of violence; several said they had advised them. In 1788, Sieyès demanded the death of the ministers. On the 14th of July, Mirabeau demanded De Broglie's head! Desmoulins lodged in his house. He marched willingly between Desmoulins and Danton; and, being tired of his Genevese, preferred these men, directing the former to write, and the latter to speak.

Target, a very moderate, prudent, cool-headed man was intimate with Desmoulins, and gave his approbation to the pamphlet *De la Lanterne*.

\* Camille Desmoulins, *Discours de la Lanterne aux Parisiens*, p. 2. He insinuates, however, rather adroitly, that those rapid condemnations are not without inconvenience, that they are liable to cause mistakes, &c.

† See the judgment of Duval d'Esprémesnil, related by C. Desmoulins in his letters.

" This deserves an explanation : Nobody believed in justice, save in that of the people.

The legists especially despised the law, the jurisprudence of that time, in contradiction to all the ideas of the age. They were well acquainted with the tribunals, and knew that the Revolution had not more passionate adversaries than the Parliament, the High Court of Justice (*le Châtelet*), and the judges in general.

Such a judgment-seat was the enemy. To give up the trial of the enemy to the enemy, and charge it to decide between the Revolution and its adversaries, was to absolve the latter, render them stronger and more haughty, and send them to the armies to begin a civil war. Were they able to make one? Yes, in spite of the enthusiasm of Paris and the taking of the Bastille. They had foreign troops, and all the officers were for them; they had especially a formidable body, which then constituted the glory of France, the officers of the navy.

The people alone, in that rapid crisis, were able to seize and strike such powerful criminals. But if the people should mistake? This objection did not embarrass the partizans of violence. They recriminated. "How many times," would they reply, "have not the Parliament and the Châtelet made mistakes?" They quoted the notorious mistakes in the cases of Calas and Sirven; they reminded their opponents of Dupaty's terrible memorial for three men condemned to the wheel,—that memorial burnt by the Parliament that was unable to answer it.

What popular trials, would they again say, can ever be more barbarous than the procedure of the regular tribunals, just as they now are, in 1789.—Secret proceedings, made entirely on documents that the defendant is not allowed to see; the accusations uncommunicated, the witnesses non-confronted, save that last short moment when the defendant, but just emerging from the utter darkness of his dungeon, bewildered by the light of day, comes to sit on his bench, replies or not, and sees his judges for the two minutes during which he hears himself condemned.\*—Barbarous procedure, more barbarous sentences, execrable punishments!—We shudder to think of Damiens torn with pincers, quartered, sprinkled with molten lead.—Just before

\* A truly eloquent passage in Dupaty's memorial for three men condemned to be broken on the wheel, p. 117 (1786, in 4to.).

the Revolution, a man was burned at Strasburg. On the 11th of August 1789, the Parliament of Paris, itself expiring, once more condemned a man to be broken on the wheel.

Such punishment, which was torture even for the spectator, wounded the souls of men, made them furious, mad, confounded every idea of justice, and subverted justice itself; the criminal who suffered such torture seemed no longer guilty; the guilty party was the judge; and a world of maledictions was heaped upon him. Sensibility was excited into fury, and pity grew ferocious. History offers several instances of this sort of furious sensibility which often transported the people beyond all the bounds of respect and fear, and made them rack and burn the officers of justice in place of the criminal.

A fact, too little noticed, but which enables us to understand a great many things, is, that several of our terrorists were men of an exquisite feverish sensibility, who felt cruelly the sufferings of the people, and whose pity turned into fury.

This remarkable phenomenon chiefly showed itself in nervous men, of a weak and irritable imagination, among artists of every kind: the artist is a man-woman.\* The people whose nerves are stronger followed that impulse, but in the earlier period never gave it. The acts of violence proceeded from the Palais Royal, where the citizens, advocates, artists, and men of letters were predominant.

Even among these men, nobody incurred the whole responsibility. A Camille Desmoulins might start the game and begin the hunt; a Danton hunted it to death—in words, of course. But there was no lack of mute actors for the execution, of pale furious men to carry the thing to La Grève, where it was urged on by inferior Dantons. In the miserable crowd surrounding the latter, were strange looking figures, like beings escaped from the other world; spectral looking men, mad with hunger, delirious from fasting, and who were no longer men. It was stated that several, on the 20th of July, had not eaten for three days. Occasionally, they were resigned, and died without injuring anybody. The women were not so resigned; *they had children*. They wandered about like lionesses. In every riot they were the most inveterate and furious; they uttered

\* I mean a complete man, who, having both sexes of the mind, is fruitful; however, having almost always the sense of irritation and cholera predominant.

cries of frenzy, and made the men ashamed of their tardiness ; the summary judgments of La Grève were ever too long for them. They hung at once.\*

England has had in this century her poetry of hunger.† Who will give its history to France? A terrible history in the last century, neglected by the historians, who have reserved their pity for the artisans of famine. I have attempted to descend into the regions of that hell, guided nearer and nearer by deep groans of agony. I have shown the land more and more sterile in proportion as the exchequer seized and destroyed the cattle, and that the earth devoid of manure is condemned to a perpetual fast. I have shown how, as the nobles, the exempt from taxes, multiplied, the impost weighed ever more heavily on an ever declining land. I have not sufficiently shown how food became, from its very scarcity, the object of an eminently productive traffic. The profits were so obvious, that the king wished also to take a part. The world saw with astonishment a king trafficking with the lives of his subjects, a king speculating on scarcity and death,—a king the assassin of his people. Famine is no longer only the result of the seasons,—a natural phenomenon ; it is neither rain nor hail. It is a deed of the civil order : people starve by order of the king.

The king here is the system. The people were starving under Louis XV., and they starve under Louis XVI.

Famine was then a science, a complicated art of administration and commerce. Its parents are the exchequer and monopoly. It engenders a race apart, a bastard breed of contractors, bankers, financiers, revenue-farmers, intendants, counsellors, and ministers. A profound expression on the alliance between the speculators and politicians was uttered from the bowels of the people : *compact of famine*.

Among those men was one who had long been famous. His name *Foulon* (very expressive,‡ and which he strove to justify) was in the mouth of the people as early as 1756. He had begun his career as an intendant of the army, and in the

\* They hung thus on the 5th of October the honest *abbé* Lefebvre, one of the heroes of the 14th of July ; luckily the rope was cut.

† Ebenezer Elliott, *Corn-law Rhymes* (Manchester, 1834), &c., &c.

As if *foulons* : let us trample (on the people).—C. C.



enemy's country. Truly terrible to Germany, he was even more so to our soldiers. His manner of victualling was as fatal as a battle of Rosbach. He had grown fat on the destitution of the army, doubly rich by the fasting of the French and the Germans.

Foulon was a speculator, financier, and contractor on one hand, and on the other a member of the Council who alone judge the contractors. He expected certainly to become minister. He would have died of grief, if bankruptcy had been effected by any other than he. The laurels of the *abbé* Terray did not allow him to sleep. He had the fault of preaching his system too loudly; his tongue counteracted his doings and rendered it impossible. The Court relished very much the idea of not paying, but it wanted to borrow, and the calling the apostle of bankruptcy to the ministry was not the way to entice lenders.

Foulon was already an old man, one of the *good old days* of Louis XV., one of that insolent school that gloried in its rapine, boldly showing it, and which, for a trophy of depredation, built on the boulevard the Pavillon of Hanover. For his part, he had erected for himself, in the most frequented thoroughfare, at the corner of the Rue du Temple, a delightful mansion, which was still admired in 1845.

He was convinced that in France, as Figaro Beaumarchais says, "Everything ends in a song;" therefore he must assume a bold face, brave and laugh at public opinion. Hence those words which were re-echoed everywhere: "If they are hungry, let them browse grass. Wait till I am minister, I will make them eat hay; my horses eat it." He is also stated to have uttered this terrible threat: "France must be mowed." *Il faut faucher la France.*

The old man believed, by such bravado, to please the young military party, and recommend himself for the day he saw approaching, when the Court, wanting to strike some desperate blow, would look out for a hardened villain.

Foulon had a son-in law after his own heart, Berthier, the intendant of Paris, a clever, but hard-hearted man, as confessed by the royalists,\* and unscrupulous, since he had espoused a fortune acquired in such a manner.

\* According to Beaulieu's confession, *Mémoires*, ii., p. 10.



Of humble extraction, being descended from a race of provincial attorneys or petty magistrates, he was hard-working, active, and energetic. A libertine at the age of fifty, in spite of his numerous family, he purchased, on all sides, so it was said, little girls twelve years of age. He knew well that he was detested by the Parisians, and was but too happy to find an opportunity of making war upon them. With old Foulon, he was the soul of the three days' ministry. Marshal de Broglie augured no good of it: he obeyed.\* But Foulon and Berthier were very ardent. The latter showed a diabolical activity in collecting arms, troops, everything together, and in manufacturing cartridges. If Paris was not laid waste with fire and sword, it was not his fault.

People feel astonished that persons so wealthy, so well-informed, of mature age and experience, should have cast themselves into such mad proceedings. The reason is, that all great financial speculators partake of the manner of gamblers; they have their temptations. Now, the most lucrative affair they could ever find, was thus to undertake to effect bankruptcy by military execution. That was hazardous. But what great affair is without risk? A profit is made on storm and fire; why not then on war and famine? Nothing risk, nothing gain.

Famine and war, I mean Foulon and Berthier, who thought they held Paris fast, were disconcerted by the taking of the Bastille.

On the evening of the 14th, Berthier attempted to reassure Louis XVI.; if he could but get from him the slightest order, he could even then pour down his Germans upon Paris.

Louis XVI. neither said nor did anything. From that moment, those two ministers felt they were dead men. Berthier fled towards the north, escaping by night from place to place; he passed four nights without sleeping, or even stopping, and yet had reached only Soissons. Foulon did not attempt to fly: first of all, he spread the report everywhere that he had not wished to be minister; next, that he was struck with apoplexy, and lastly pretended he was dead. He had himself buried with great pomp (one of his servants having died at the

\* Alex. de Lameth, *Hist. de l'Assemblée constituante*, i., p. 67.

right moment.) This being done, he repaired very quietly to the house of his worthy friend Sartine, the former lieutenant of police.

He had good reason to be afraid: the movement was terrible. Let us go back a little. As early as the month of May, famine had exiled whole populations, driving them one upon the other. Caen and Rouen, Orleans, Lyons, and Nancy, had witnessed struggles for corn. Marseilles had seen at her gates a band of eight thousand famished people who must pillage or die; the whole town, in spite of the Government, in spite of the Parliament of Aix, had taken up arms, and remained armed.

The movement slackened a moment in June. All France, with eyes fixed on the Assembly, was waiting for it to conquer: no other hope of salvation. The most extreme sufferings were for a moment silent; one thought was predominant over all others.

Who can describe the rage, the horror of hope deceived, on the news of Necker's dismissal. Necker was not a politician; he was, as we have seen, timid, vain-glorious, and ridiculous. But in what concerned subsistence, it is but justice to say, that he was an indefatigable, ingenious administrator, full of industry and resources.\* What is far better, he showed himself to be an honest, good, kind-hearted man; when nobody would lend to the state, he borrowed in his own name, and engaged his own credit as far as two millions of francs, the half of his fortune. When dismissed, he did not withdraw his security; but wrote to the lenders that he maintained it. In a word, if he knew not how to govern, he nourished the people, and fed them with his own money.

Necker and subsistence were words that had the same sound in the ears of the people. Necker's dismissal and famine, hopeless, irremediable famine, was what France felt on the 12th of July.

The provincial Bastilles, that of Caen and that of Bordeaux, either surrendered, or were taken by force, at the same time as that of Paris. At Rennes, Saint Malo, and Strasburg, the troops sided with the people. At Caen there was a fight among

\* See Necker, *Œuvres*, vi., pp. 298—324.

the soldiers. A few men of the Artois regiment were wearing the patriotic symbols ; those of the Bourbon regiment, taking advantage of their being unarmed, tore them away. It was thought that Major Belzunce had paid them to offer this insult to their companions. Belzunce was a smart, witty officer, but impertinent, violent, and haughty. He was loud in expressing his contempt for the National Assembly, for the people, the *canaille* ; he used to walk in the town, armed to the teeth, with a ferocious-looking servant.\* His looks were provoking. The people lost patience, threatened, and besieged the barracks ; an officer had the imprudence to fire ; and then the people ran to fetch cannon ; Belzunce surrendered, or was given up to be conducted to prison ; he could not reach it ; he was fired upon and killed, and his body torn piece-meal : a woman ate his heart.

There was blood-shed at Rouen and Lyons : at Saint Germain, a miller was beheaded : a monopolist baker was near being put to death at Poissy ; he was saved only by a deputation of the Assembly, who showed themselves admirable for courage and humanity, risked their lives, and preserved the man only after having begged him of the people on their knees.

Foulon would perhaps have outlived the storm, if he had not been hated by all France. His misfortune was to be so by those who knew him best, by his vassals and servants. They did not lose sight of him, neither had they been duped by the pretended burial. They followed and found the dead man alive and well, walking in M. de Sartine's park : " You wanted to give us hay," said they, " you shall eat some yourself ! " They put a truss of hay on his back, and adorn him with a nosegay of nettles, and a collar of thistles. They then lead him on foot to Paris, to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and demand his trial of the electors, the only authority that remained. The latter must then have regretted they had not hastened the popular decision which was about to create a real municipal power, give them successors, and put an end to their royalty. Royalty is the word ; the French Guards mounted guard at the royal palace of Versailles only on orders received (strange to say) from the electors of Paris.

\* *Mémoires de Dumouriez*, ii., p. 53.

That illegal power, invoked for everything, but powerless in all things, weakened still further by its fortuitous association with the ancient eschevins, having nobody for its head but the worthy Bailly, the new mayor, and for its arm only Lafayette, the commander of a scarcely organised national guard, was now about to find itself in face of a terrible necessity.

They heard almost at the same time that Berthier had been arrested at Compiègne, and that Foulon was being conducted back again. For the former, they assumed a responsibility both serious and bold (fear is so sometimes), that of telling the people of Compiègne : " That there was no reason for detaining M. Berthier." They replied that he would then be assuredly killed at Compiègne, and that he could only be saved by conducting him to Paris.

As to Foulon, it was decided : That henceforth delinquents of that description should be lodged in the Abbaye, and that these words should be inscribed over the door : " Prisoners entrusted to the care of the nation." This general measure, taken in the interest of one man, secured for the ex-counsellor his trial by his friends and colleagues, the ancient magistrates, the only judges of that time.

All that was too evident ; but also well watched by keensighted men, the attorneys and the Basoche, by annuitants, enemies of the minister of bankruptcy, and lastly, by many men who held public securities and were ruined by the fall in the funds. An attorney filed an indictment against Berthier, for his deposits of guns. The Basoche maintained that he had moreover one of those deposits with the abbess of Montmartre, and obliged a search to be made. La Grève was full of men, strangers to the people, "*of a decent exterior*," and some very well dressed. The Exchange was at La Grève.

People came at the same time to the Hôtel-de-Ville, to denounce Beaumarchais, another financier, who had stolen some papers from the Bastille. They ordered them to be taken back.

It was thought that the poor, at all events, might be kept silent by filling their mouths ; so they lowered the price of bread : by means of a sacrifice of thirty thousand francs per day, the price was fixed at thirteen sous and a half the four pounds (equal to twenty sous at the present time).

The multitude of La Grève did not vociferate the less. At two, Bailly descends ; all demand justice. " He expounded the principles," and made some impression on those who were within hearing. The others shouted : " Hang ! Hang him ! " Bailly prudently withdrew, and shut himself up in the *Bureau des Subsistances*. The guard was strong, said he, but M. de Lafayette, who relied on his ascendancy, had the imprudence to lessen it.

The crowd was in a terrible fever of uneasiness lest Foulon should escape. He was shown to them at a window ; nevertheless, they broke open the doors : it became necessary to place him in a chair in front of the bureau, in the great hall of Saint-Jean. There, they began to preach to the crowd again, to " expound the principles," that he must be judged. " Judged instantly, and hung ! " cried the crowd. So saying, they appointed judges, among others two *curés*, who refused. " Make room there for M. de Lafayette ! " He arrives, speaks in his turn, avows that Foulon is a villain, but says it is necessary to discover his accomplices ; " Let him be conducted to the Abbaye ! " The front ranks, who heard him, consented ; not so the others. " You are joking," exclaimed a well-dressed man, " does it require time to judge a man who has been judged these thirty years ? " At the same time, a shout is heard, and a new crowd rushes in ; some say : " It is the faubourg," others : " It is the Palais Royal." Foulon is carried off and dragged to the lamp opposite ; they make him demand pardon of the nation. Then hoist him.—The rope broke twice. They persisted, and go for a new one. At length, having hung him, they chopped off his head, and carried it through Paris.

Meanwhile, Berthier has just arrived by the Porte Saint-Martin, through the most frightful mob that was ever seen : he had been followed for twenty leagues. He was in a cabriolet, the top of which they had broken to pieces in order to see him. Beside him sat an elector, Etienne de la Rivière, who was twenty times near being killed in defending him, and shielding him with his body. A furious mob was dancing on before him ; others flung black bread into the carriage :—" Take that, brigand, that is the bread you made us eat ! "

What had also exasperated all the population about Paris



was, that amid the scarcity, the numerous cavalry collected by Berthier and Foulon, had destroyed or eaten a great quantity of young green corn. This havoc was attributed to the orders of the intendant, to his firm resolution to prevent there being any crop and to starve the people.

To adorn that horrible procession of death, they carried before Berthier, as in the Roman triumphs, inscriptions to his glory :—" He has robbed the king and France. He has devoured the substance of the people. He has been the slave of the rich, and the tyrant of the poor. He has drunk the blood of the widow and the orphan. He has cheated the king. He has betrayed his country."\*

At the fountain Maubuée, they had the barbarity to shew him Foulon's head, livid, with the mouth full of hay. At that sight his eyes were glazed ; he smiled a ghastly smile.

They forced Bailly at the Hôtel-de-Ville to take his examination. Berthier alleged superior orders. The minister was his father-in-law, it was the same person. Moreover, if the hall of Saint-Jean was inclined to listen a little, La Grève neither listened nor heard ; the vociferations were so dreadful, that the mayor and the electors felt more uneasy every moment. A new crowd of people having forced its way through the very mass, it was no longer possible to hold out. The mayor, on the advice of the board, exclaimed : " To the Abbaye ! " adding that the guards were answerable for the prisoner. They could not defend him ; but, seizing a gun, he defended himself. He was stabbed with a hundred bayonets ; a dragoon, who imputed his father's death to him, tore out his heart, and ran to show it at the Hôtel-de-Ville.

The spectators in La Grève, who had watched from the windows the tact of the leaders in urging and exciting the mob, believed that Berthier's accomplices had taken their measures well, in order that he might not have the time to make any revelation. He alone, perhaps, possessed the real intentions of the party. They found in his portfolio the description of the persons of many friends of liberty, who, doubtless, had no mercy to expect, if the court conquered.

\* *Histoire de la Révolution de '89, par deux amis de la liberté (Kerverseau et Clavelin, jusqu'au t. 7.) t. 2, p. 130.* See also the account of Etienne de la Rivière, in the *Procès-verbal des Électeurs*.



However this may be, a great number of the comrades of the dragoon declared to him, that having dishonoured the company he must die, and that they would all fight him till he was killed. He was killed the same evening.

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## CHAPTER III.

### FRANCE IN ARMS.

Embarrassment of the Assembly.—It engages the People to confide in it, July 23rd.—Distrust of the People; Fears of Paris; Alarm of the Provinces.—Conspiracy of Brest; the Court compromised by the English Ambassador, July 27th.—Fury of the old Nobles and new Nobles: Menaces and Plots.—Terror in the Rural Districts.—The Peasants take up arms against the Brigands, Burn the Feudal Charters, and set fire to several Châteaux.—July to August, 1789.

THE vampires of the *ancien régime*, whose lives had done so much harm to France, did still more by their death.

Those people, whom Mirabeau termed so well “the refuse of public contempt,” are as if restored to character by punishment. The gallows becomes their apotheosis. They are now become interesting victims, the martyrs of monarchy; their legend will go on increasing in pathetic fictions. Mr. Burke canonized them and prayed on their tomb.

The acts of violence of Paris, and those of which the provinces were the theatre, placed the National Assembly in a difficult position, from which it could not well escape.

If it did not act, it would seem to encourage anarchy and authorise murder, and thus furnish a text for eternal calumny.

If it attempted to remedy the disorder, and raise fallen authority, it restored, not to the king, but to the queen and the court, the sword that the people had shivered in their hands.

In either hypothesis, despotism and caprice were about to be re-established, either for the old royalty or the royalty of the mob. At that moment they were destroying the odious symbol of despotism—the Bastille; and behold another Bastille—arbitrary rule—again springing up.

England rubs her hands with glee at this, and is grateful to

the *Lanterne*. "Thank God," says she, "the Bastille will never disappear."

What would you have done? Tell us, you officious counsellors, you friendly enemies, sages of European aristocracy, you who so carefully pour calumny on the hatred you have planted. Sitting at your ease on the dead bodies of Ireland, Italy, and Poland, deign to answer; have not your revolutions of interest cost more blood than our revolutions of ideas?

What would you have done? Doubtless what was advised on the eve and the morrow of the 22nd of July, by Lally Tollendal, Mounier, and Malouet; to re-establish order, they wished that power should be restored to the king. Lally put his whole trust in the king's virtues. Malouet wanted them to entreat the king to use his power and lend a strong hand to the municipal authority. The king would have armed, and not the people; no national guard. Should the people complain, why then let them apply to the Parliament and the Attorney-General. Have we not magistrates? Foulon was a magistrate. So Malouet would send Foulon to the tribunal of Foulon.

It is necessary, they very truly said, to repress disturbances. Only it was necessary to come to a right understanding. This word comprehended many things:

Thefts, other ordinary crimes, pillaging committed by a starving population, murders of monopolists, irregular judgment pronounced on the enemies of the people, resistance offered to their plottings, legal resistance, resistance in arms. All comprised in the word *troubles*. Did they wish to suppress all with an equal hand? If royal authority was charged to repress the disturbances, the greatest in its estimation was, most certainly, the taking of the Bastille; it would have punished that first.

This was the reply made by Buzot and Robespierre on the 20th of July, two days before the death of Foulon; and this was what Mirabeau said, in his journal, after the event. He set this misfortune before the Assembly in its true light,—the absence of all authority in Paris, the impotency of the electors, who, without any lawful delegation of power, continued to exercise the municipal functions. He wished municipalities to be organised, invested with strength, and who should under-

take the maintenance of order. Indeed what other means were there than to strengthen the local power, when the central power was so justly suspected?

Barnave said three things were necessary: well-organized municipalities, citizen guards, and a legal administration of the law that might reassure the people.

What was that legal administration to be? A deputy-substitute, Dufresnoy, sent by a district of Paris, demanded sixty jurymen, chosen from the sixty districts. This proposition, supported by petition, was modified by another deputy, who wished magistrates to be added to the jurymen.

The Assembly came to no decision. An hour after midnight, being weary of contention, it adopted a proclamation, in which it claimed the prosecution of crimes of *lèse-nation*, *reserving to itself the right to indicate in the constitution the tribunal that should judge*. This was postponing for a long time. It invited to peace, for this reason: That the king had acquired *more rights than ever to the confidence* of the people, that there existed a *perfect accord*, &c.

Confidence! And yet there never was any confidence again! At the very moment the Assembly was speaking of confidence, a sad light burst forth, and fresh dangers were seen. The Assembly had been wrong; the people had been right. However willing the people might be to be deceived, and believe all was ended, common sense whispered that the *ancien régime* being conquered, would wish to have its revenge. Was it possible that a power which had possessed, for ages, all the forces of the country, administration, finances, armies, and tribunals, that still had everywhere its agents, its officers, its judges, without any change, and for compulsory partisans, two or three hundred thousand nobles or priests, proprietors of one-half or two-thirds of the kingdom,—could that immense and complicated power, which covered all France, die like one man, at once, by a single blow? Had it fallen down dead, shot by a cannon-ball of July? That is what the most simple child could not have been induced to believe.

It was not dead. It had been struck and wounded; morally it was dead; physically it was not. It might rise again. How would that phantom reappear? That was the whole question put by the people!—the one that troubled the imagination,

Common sense here assumed a thousand forms of popular superstition.

Everybody used to go and see the Bastille; all beheld with terror the prodigious rope ladder by which Latude descended the towers. They would visit those ominous towers, and these dark, deep, fetid dungeons, where the prisoner, on a level with the common sewers, lived besieged and menaced by rats, toads, and every kind of foul vermin.

Beneath a staircase they found two skeletons, with a chain and a cannon-ball which one of those unfortunates had doubtless to drag after him. Those dead bodies indicated crime. For the prisoners were never buried within the fortress; they were always carried by night to the cemetery of Saint Paul, the church of the Jesuits (the confessors of the Bastille); where they were buried under names of servants, so that nobody ever knew whether they were alive or dead. As for those two, the workmen who found them gave them the only reparation the dead could receive; twelve among them, bearing their implements, and holding the pall with respect, carried and buried them honourably in the parish church.

They were even hoping to make other discoveries in that old cavern of kings. Outraged humanity was taking its revenge; people enjoyed a mingled sentiment of hatred, fear, and curiosity,—an insatiable curiosity, which, when everything had been seen, hunted and searched for more, wished to penetrate further, suspected something else, imagined prisons under prisons, dungeons under dungeons, into the very bowels of the earth.

The imagination actually sickened at that Bastille. So many centuries and generations of prisoners who had there succeeded each other, so many hearts broken by despair, so many tears of rage, and heads dashed against the stones. What! had nothing left a trace! At most, some poor inscription, scratched with a nail, and illegible? Cruel envy of time, the accomplice of tyranny, conniving with it to efface every vestige of the victims!

They could see nothing, but they listened. There were certainly some sounds, groans, and hollow moans. Was it imagination? Why, everybody heard them. Were they to believe that wretched beings were still buried at the bottom of

some secret dungeon known only to the governor who had perished? The district of the Ile Saint-Louis, and others, demanded that they should seek the cause of those lamentable groans. Once, twice, nay, several times, the people returned to the charge; in spite of all these searches, they could not make up their minds: they were full of trouble and uneasiness for those unfortunates, perhaps buried alive.

Then again, if they were not prisoners, might they not be enemies? Was there not some communication, under the faubourg, between the subterraneous passages of the Bastille and those of Vincennes? Might not gunpowder be passed from one fortress to the other, and execute what De Launey had conceived the idea of doing, to blow up the Bastille, and overwhelm and crush the faubourg of liberty?

Public searches were made, and a solemn and authentic inquiry, in order to tranquillise the minds of the people. The imagination then transported its dream elsewhere. It transferred its mine and its fears to the opposite side of Paris, into those immense cavities whence our monuments were dug, those abysses whence we have drawn the Louvre, Notre Dame, and other churches. There, in 1786, had been cast, without there being any appearance of it (so vast are those caverns) all who had died in Paris for a thousand years, a terrible mass of dead bodies, which, during that year, were transported by night in funeral cars, preceded by the clergy, to seek, from the Innocents to the Tombe Issoire, a final repose and complete oblivion.

Those dead bodies were calling for others, and it was doubtless there that a volcano was preparing; the mine, from the Pantheon to the sky, was going to blow up Paris, and letting it fall again, would confound the shattered and disfigured members of the living and the dead,—a chaos of palpitating limbs, dead bodies, and skeletons.

Those means of extermination seemed unnecessary; famine was sufficient. A bad year was followed by a worse; the little corn that had grown up about Paris was trodden, spoilt, or eaten by the numerous cavalry that had been collected. Nay, the corn disappeared without horse-soldiers. People saw, or fancied they saw, armed bands that came by night and cut the unripe corn. Foulon, though dead, seemed to return on purpose to perform to the letter what he had promised: "Mow France."



To cut down the green corn and destroy it in the second year of famine, was also to mow down men.

Terror went on spreading ; the couriers, repeating those rumours, spread it every day from one end of the kingdom to the other. They had not seen the brigands, but others had ; they were at such and such places, marching forwards, numerous, and armed to the teeth ; they would arrive probably that night or on the morrow without fail. At such a place, they had cut down the corn in broad daylight, as the municipality of Soissons wrote in despair to the National Assembly, demanding assistance ; a whole army of brigands were said to be marching against that town. They hunted for them ; but they had disappeared in the mists of evening or in the morning fog.

What is more real, is, that to the dreadful scourge of famine, some had conceived the idea of adding another, which makes us shudder, when we do but remember the hundred years of warfare which, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, made a cemetery of our unfortunate country. They wanted to bring the English into France. This has been denied ; yet why ? It is more than likely, since it was solicited at a subsequent period ; attempted, and foiled at Quiberon.

But then, the question was not to bring their fleet on a shore difficult of access and destitute of defence, but to establish them firmly in a good, defensible place, to hand over to them the naval arsenal, wherein France, for a whole century, had expended her millions, her labours, and her energies ; the head, the prow of our great national vessel, and the stumbling-block of England. The question was to give up Brest.

Ever since France had assisted in the deliverance of America, and cut the British empire asunder, England had desired not its misery, but its ruin and utter destruction ; that some strong autumnal tide would raise the ocean from its bed, and cover with one grand flood all the land from Calais to the Vosges, the Pyrenees, and the Alps.

But, there was something still more desirable to be seen, which was, that this new inundation should be one of blood, the blood of France, drawn by herself from her own veins, that she should commit suicide and tear out her intestines.

The conspiracy of Brest was a good beginning. Only, there was reason to fear that England, by making friends with the



villains who were selling her their native land, might unite against her all France reconciled in one common indignation, and that there should be no longer any party.

Another thing might have sufficed to restrain the English government, which is, that, in the first moments, England, in spite of her hate, smiled upon our Revolution. She had no suspicion of its extent; in that great French and European movement, which was no less than the advent of eternal right, she fancied she perceived an imitation of her own petty insular and egotistical revolution of the seventeenth century. She applauded France as a mother encourages the child that is trying to walk after her. A strange sort of mother, who was not quite sure whether she would rather the child should walk or break its neck.

Therefore, England withstood the temptation of Brest. She was virtuous, and revealed the thing to the ministers of Louis XVI., without mentioning the names of the parties. In that half revelation, she found an immense advantage, that of perplexing France, to complete the measure of distrust and suspicion, have a terrible hold on that feeble government, and take a mortgage upon it. There was every chance of its not inquiring seriously into the plot, fearful of finding more than it wished and of smiting its own friends. And if it did not inquire, if it kept the secret to itself, England was able at any time to unveil the awful mystery. It kept that sword suspended over the head of Louis XVI.

Dorset, the English ambassador, was an agreeable man; he never stirred from Versailles; many thought he had found favour in the eyes of the queen, and had been well received. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him, after the taking of the Bastille, the importance of which he fully appreciated, as well as the weight of the blow that the king had received, from seizing every opportunity of ruining Louis, as far as lay in his power.

A rather equivocal letter from Dorset to the Count d'Artois having been intercepted by chance, he wrote to the minister that they were wrong in suspecting him of having in the least influenced the disturbances of Paris; far from it, added he quietly, your Excellency knows well the eagerness I evinced in imparting to you the infamous conspiracy of Brest, *in the begin-*

ning of June, the horror felt by my court, and the renewed assurance of its sincere attachment for the king and the nation. And then he entreated the minister to communicate his letter to the National Assembly.

In other words, he begged him to hang himself. His letter of the 26th of July stated, and published to the world, that the court, for two whole months, had kept the secret, without either acting or adopting, apparently reserving that plot as a last weapon in case of civil war,—the dagger of mercy (*poignard de miséricorde*), as they called it in the middle ages, which the warrior always kept, so that, when vanquished, thrown on the ground, and his sword broken, he might, whilst begging his life, assassinate his conqueror.

The minister Montmorin, dragged by the English into broad daylight, before the National Assembly, had but a very poor explanation to give, namely, that, not having the names of the guilty parties, they had been unable to prosecute. The Assembly did not insist; but the blow was struck, and was but so much the heavier. It was felt by all France.

Dorset's affirmation, which might have been believed to be false, a fiction, a brand cast at random by our enemies, appeared confirmed by the imprudence of the officers in the garrison of Brest, who, on the news of the taking of the Bastille, made a demonstration of intrenching themselves in the castle, menacing to subject the town to martial law, if it should stir. This it instantly did, taking up arms, and overpowering the guard of the port. The soldiers and sailors, bribed in vain by their officers, sided with the people. The noble corps of the marine was very aristocratical, but certainly anything but English. Suspicions nevertheless extended even to them, and even further, to the nobles of Brittany. In vain were the latter indignant, and vainly did they protest their loyalty.

This irritation carried to excess made people credit the foulest plots. The prolonged obstinacy of the nobility in remaining separate from the Third in the States-General, the bitter, desperate dispute which had arisen on that occasion in every town, large or small, in villages and hamlets, often in the same house, had inculcated an indelible idea in the people, that the noble was an enemy.

A considerable portion of the higher nobility, illustrious and

memorable in history, did what was necessary to prove that this idea was false, not at all fearful of the Revolution, and believing that, do what it might, it could not destroy history. But the others, and smaller gentry, less proud of their rank, more vain-glorious or more frank, moreover piqued every day by the new rising of the people whom they saw approaching nearer them, and who incommoded them more, declared themselves boldly the enemies of the Revolution.

The new nobles and the Parliament people were the most furious; the magistrates had become more warlike than the military; they spoke of nothing but battles, and vowed death, blood, and ruin. Those among them who had been till then the vanguard in opposing the wishes of the court, who had the most relished popularity, the love and enthusiasm of the public, were astounded and enraged, to see themselves suddenly indifferent or hated. They hated with a boundless hate. They often sought the cause of that very sudden change in the artful machination of their personal enemies, and political enmities were still further envenomed by ancient family feuds. At Quimper, one Kersalaun, a member of the Parliament of Brittany, one of the friends of Chalotais, and very lately the ardent champion of parliamentary opposition, becoming suddenly a still more ardent royalist and aristocrat, would walk gravely among the hooting crowds, who, however, durst not touch him, and naming his enemies aloud, used to say: "I shall judge them shortly, and wash my hands in their blood."\*

One of these Parliament people, M. Memmay de Quincey, a noble *seigneur* in Franche-Comté, did not confine himself to threats. Envenomed probably by local animosity, and with his mind in a fever of frenzy, urged likewise perhaps by that fatal propensity of imitation which causes one infamous crime very often to engender many others, he realized precisely what De Launey had wanted to do,—what the people of Paris believed they had still to fear. He gave out at Vesoul, and in the neighbourhood, that by way of rejoicings for the good news, he would give a feast and keep open house. Citizens, peasants, soldiers, all arrive, drink, and dance. The earth opens, and a mine bursts, shatters, shivers, and destroys at random; the

\* Duchatellier, *La Révolution en Bretagne*, i., p. 175.

ground is strewn with bleeding members. The whole was attested by the *curé*, who confessed a few of the wounded who survived, attested by the *gendarmerie*, and brought on the 25th of July before the National Assembly. The Assembly being exasperated, obtained leave from the king that every power should be written to, in order to demand that the guilty should be delivered up.\*

An opinion was gaining ground and growing stronger, that the brigands who used to cut down the corn, in order to starve the people, were not foreigners, as had been first supposed, not Italians or Spaniards, as Marseilles believed in May, but Frenchmen, enemies to France, furious enemies of the Revolution, their agents, their servants, and bands whom they paid.†

The horror of them increased, everybody believing he had exterminating demons about him. In the morning, they would run to the field, to see whether it was not laid waste. In the evening, they were uneasy, fearing they might be burned in the night. At the very name of these brigands, mothers would snatch up their children and conceal them.

Where then was that royal protection, on the faith of which the people had so long slept? Where that old guardianship which had so well re-assured them that they had remained minors, and had, as it were, grown up without ceasing to be

\* Later, M. de Memmay was restored on the pleading of M. Courvoisier. He maintained that the accident had been occasioned by the barrel of gunpowder, left *by chance* beside some drunken men. Three things had contributed to create another suspicion: 1st. M. de Memmay's absence on the day of the feast; he was unwilling to be present, he said, wishing to give full scope to the rejoicings; 2ndly, his entire disappearance; 3rdly, the Parliament, of which he was an ancient member, would not allow the ordinary tribunals to make an inquiry, called the affair before a higher court, and reserved the trial to itself.

† The historians all affirm, without the least proof, that these alarms and accusations, all that great commotion, proceeded from Paris, from such and such persons. Doubtless, the leaders influenced the Palais Royal; the Palais Royal, Paris; and Paris, France. It is not less inexact to attribute everything to the Duke of Orleans, like most of the royalists; or to Duport, like M. Droz; to Mirabeau, like Montgaillard, &c. See the very wise answer of Alexandre de Lameth. What he ought to have added is, that Mirabeau, Duport, the Lameths, the Duke of Orleans, and most of the men of that period, less energetic than is believed, were delighted in being thought to possess so much money, such vast influence. They replied but little to such accusations, smiled greedily, leaving such to believe as would, that they were great villains.

children? They began to perceive that, no matter what sort of man Louis XVI. might be, royalty was the intimate friend of the enemy.

The king's troops, which, at other times, would have appeared a protection, were precisely a subject of dread. Who were at their head? The more insolent of the nobles, those who the least concealed their hate. They used to excite, to bribe when necessary the soldiers against the people, and to intoxicate their Germans; they seemed to be preparing an attack.

Man was obliged to rely on himself, and on himself alone. In that complete absence of authority and public protection, his duty as a father of a family constituted him the defender of his household. He became, in his house, the magistrate, the king, the law, and the sword to execute the law, agreeably to the old proverb: "The poor man in his home is king."

The hand of Justice, the sword of Justice: that king has his scythe in default of gun, his mattock, or his iron fork. Now let those brigands come! But he does not wait for them. Neighbours unite, villagers unite, and go armed into the country to see whether those villains dare come. They proceed and behold a band. Do not fire however. Those are the people of another village, friends and relations, who are also hunting about.\*

France was armed in a week. The National Assembly learn every moment the miraculous progress of that Revolution; they find themselves, in an instant, at the head of the most numerous army ever seen since the crusades. Every courier that arrived astonished and almost frightened them. One day, somebody came and said: "You have two hundred thousand men." The next day, another said: "You have five hundred thousand men." Others arrived: "A million of men have armed this week,—two millions, three millions."

And all that great armed multitude, rising suddenly from the furrow, asked the Assembly what they were to do.

Where then is the old army? It seems to have disappeared. The new one, being so numerous, must have stifled it without fighting, merely by crowding together.

People have said *France is a soldier*, and so she has been from that day. On that day a new race rose from the earth,—

\* Montlosier, *Mémoires*, i., p. 233. Toulangeon, i., p. 56, &c., &c.



children born with teeth to tear eartridges, and with strong indefatigable limbs to march from Cairo to the Kremlin, and with the admirable gift of being able to march and fight without eating, of having only "their good spirits to feed and clothe them."

Relying on their good spirits, joy and hope ! Who then has a right to hope, if it be not he who bears in his bosom the enfranchisement of the world ?

Did France exist before that time ? It might be denied. She became at once a sword and a principle. To be thus armed is *to be*. What has neither idea nor strength, exists but on sufferance.

They *were* in fact ; and they wanted *to be* by right.

The barbarous middle ages did not admit their existence, denying them as men, and considering them only as things. That period taught, in its singular school-divinity, that souls redeemed at the same price are all worth the blood of a God ; then debased those souls, thus exalted, to brutes, fastened them to the earth, adjudged them to eternal bondage, and annihilated liberty.

This lawless right they called conquest, that is to say, ancient injustice. Conquest, would it say, made the nobles, the lords. "If that be all," said Sièyes, "we will be conquerors in our turn."

Feudal right alleged, moreover, those hypocritical aets, wherein it was supposed that man stipulated against himself : wherein the weaker party, through fear or force, gave himself up without reserving anything, gave away the future, the possible, his children unborn, and future generations. Those guilty parchments, a disgrace to nature, had been sleeping with impunity for ages in the archives of the castles.

Much was said about the grand example given by Louis XVI., who had enfranchised the last serfs of his domains. An imperceptible sacrifice that cost the treasury but little, and which had scarcely any imitator in France.

What ! it will be said, were the *seigneurs* in '89 hard-hearted, merciless men ?

By no means. They were a very varied class of men, but generally feeble and physically decayed, frivolous, sensual, and sensitive, so sensitive that they could not look closely at the



unfortunate.\* They saw them in idyls, operas, stories, and romances, which caused them to shed tears of compassion; they wept with Bernardin Saint-Pierre, with Grétry and Sedaine, Berquin and Florian; they found merit in their tears, and would say to themselves: "I have a good heart."

Thus weak-hearted, easy, open-handed, and incapable of withstanding the temptation of spending, they required money, much money, more than their fathers. Hence the necessity of deriving large profits from their lands, of handing the peasant over to men of money, stewards, and agents. The more feeling the masters possessed, the more generous and philanthropic they were at Paris, and the more their vassals died of hunger; they lived less at their castles, in order not to see this misery, which would have been too painful for their sensibility.

Such was in general that feeble, worn-out, effeminate society. It willingly spared itself the sight of oppression, and oppressed only by proxy. However, there were not wanting provincial nobles, who prided themselves on maintaining in their castles the rude feudal traditions, and governed their family and their vassals harshly. Let us merely mention here the celebrated *Ami des hommes*, Mirabeau's father, the enemy of his family, who would lock up all his household, wife, sons, and daughters, people the state-prisons, have law-suits with his neighbours, and reduce his people to despair. He relates that, on giving a *fête*, he was himself astonished at the moody, savage aspect of his peasants. I can easily believe it; those poor people were probably afraid lest the *Ami des hommes* should take them for his children.

We must not be surprised if the peasant, having once taken up arms, made use of them, and had his revenge. Several lords had cruelly vexed their districts, who remembered it when the time had come. One of them had walled up the village well, and monopolised it for his own use. Another had seized on the common lands. They perished. Several other murders are recorded, which, doubtless, were acts of revenge.

\* This is confessed by M. De Maitre, in his *Considérations sur la Révolution* (1796).

The general arming of the towns was imitated in the rural districts. The taking of the Bastille encouraged them to attack their own bastilles. The only subject of astonishment, when one knows what they underwent, is, that they began so late. Sufferings and promises of revenge had accumulated by delay, and been stored up to a frightful height. When that monstrous avalanche, long pent up in a state of ice and snow, suddenly thawed, such a mass gave way, that everything was overwhelmed in its fall.

It would be necessary to distinguish, in that immense scene of confusion what appertains to the *wandering bands* of pillagers,—people driven about by famine, from what the *domiciled peasants*, the *communes*, did against their lord.

The evil has been carefully collected, but not so the good. Several lords found defenders in their vassals: for instance, the Marquis de Montfermeil, who, in the preceding year, had borrowed a hundred thousand francs in order to relieve them. Nay, the most furious sometimes stopped short in presence of weak adversaries. In Dauphiné, for instance, a castle was respected, because they found in it only a sick lady, in bed, with her children; they merely destroyed the feudal archives.

Generally, the peasant marched at once to the castle to demand arms; then, more daring, he burned the acts and titles. The greater part of those instruments of bondage, those which were the most immediate and oppressive, were much oftener in the register offices, with the attorneys and notaries. The peasant rarely went there. He preferred attacking the antiquities,—the original charters. Those primitive titles, on fine parchments, adorned with triumphant seals, remained in the treasury of the castle to be shown on grand days. They were stored away in sumptuous cases, in velvet portfolios at the bottom of an oaken ark,—the glory of the turret. No important feudal manor but showed, near its feudal dove-cote, its tower of archives.

Our country people went straight to the tower. There, in their estimation, was the Bastille, tyranny, pride, insolence, and the contempt of mankind; for many centuries, that tower had seemed to sneer at the valley, sterilizing, blighting, and oppressing it with its deadly shadow. A guardian of the country in barbarous times, standing there as a sentinel, it became

later an object of horror, In '89, what was it but the odious witness of bondage, a perpetual outrage, to repeat every morning to the man trudging to his labour, the everlasting humiliation of his race! "Work, work on, son of serfs, earn for another's profit; work, and without hope."

Every morning and every evening, for a thousand years, perhaps more, that tower had been cursed. A day came when it was to fall.

O glorious day, how long you have been in coming! How long our fathers expected and dreamed of you in vain! The hope that their sons would at length behold you, was alone able to support them; otherwise, they would no longer have consented to live; they would have died in their agony. And what has enabled me, their companion labouring beside them in the furrow of history, and drinking their bitter cup, to revive the suffering middle ages, and yet not die of grief? Was it not you, O glorious day, first day of liberty? I have lived in order to relate your history!

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.—Disturbances; the Danger of France.—The Assembly creates the Committee of Inquiry, July 27th.—Attempts made by the Court; it wants to prevent the Trial of Besenval; the Royalist Party wishes to make a Weapon of Public Charity.—The Revolutionary Part of the Nobility offer to abandon the Feudal Rights.—*Night of the 4th of August*; Class Privileges abandoned; Resistance of the Clergy; Privileges of Provinces abandoned.

ABOVE all that great commotion, in a region more serene, the National Assembly, without allowing itself to be molested by noise and clamour, was buried in thought and meditation.

The violence of party spirit which had divided it, seemed awed and restrained by the grand discussion with which its labours began. Then people plainly saw how profoundly that aristocracy, the natural adversary of the interests of the Revolution, had been wounded in its ideas. They were all Frenchmen, after all, all sons of the eighteenth century and philosophy.

Either side of the Assembly, preserving its opposition, nevertheless entered upon the solemn examination of the *declaration of rights* with due solemnity.

The question was not a petition of rights, as in England, an appeal to the written law, to contested charters, or to the true or false liberties of the Middle Ages.

The question was not, as in America, to go seeking from state to state the principles which each of them acknowledged, to sum up and generalize them, and construct with them (*à posteriori*) the total formula which the confederation would accept.

The question was to give from above, by virtue of a sovereign, imperial, pontifical authority, the *credo* of the new age. What authority? Reason, discussed by a whole century of philosophers, profound thinkers, accepted by every mind and penetrating social order, and lastly, fixed and reduced to a formula by the logicians of the Constituent Assembly. The question was to impose as authority on reason what reason had found at the bottom of free inquiry.

It was the philosophy of the age, its legislator, its Moses, descending from the mount, with the rays of glory on its brow, and bearing the tables of the law in its hands.

There have been many disputations for and against the declaration of rights, but nothing to the point.

First of all, we have nothing to say to such as Bentham and Dumont, to utilitarians and quacks, who acknowledge no law but the written law, who know not that right is right only so far as it is conformable to right, to absolute reason. Mere attorneys, nothing more, in the garb of philosophers; what right have they to despise practical men? Like them, who write the law upon paper and parchment, we would engrave ours on tables of eternal right, on the rock that bears the world: invariable justice and indestructible equity.

To answer our enemies, let us confine ourselves to them and their contradictions. They sneer at the Declaration, and submit to it; they wage war against it for thirty years, promising their people the liberties which it consecrates. When conquerors in 1814, the first word they address to France they borrow from the grand formula which she laid

down.\* Conquerors did I say? No, conquered rather, and conquered in their own hearts; since their most personal act, the treaty of the Holy Alliance, reproduces the right that they have trampled on.

The Declaration of *Rights* attests the Supreme Being, the guarantee of human morality. It breathes the sentiment of *duty*. Duty, though not expressed, is no less everywhere present; everywhere you perceive its austere gravity. A few words borrowed from the language of Condillae, do not prevent us from recognising in the *ensemble* the true genius of the Revolution,—a Roman gravity and a stoic spirit.

*Right* was the first thing to be spoken of at such a moment,† it was rights that it was necessary to attest and claim for the people. People had believed till then that they had only *duties*.

However high and general such an act may be, and made to last for ever, can one reasonably expect it to bear no marks of the troublous period of its birth, no sign of the storm?

The first word was uttered three days before the 14th of July and the taking of the Bastille; the last, a few days before the people brought the king to Paris (the 6th of October). A sublime apparition of right between two storms.

No circumstances were ever more terrible, nor any discussion more majestic or more serious, even in the midst of emotion. The crisis afforded specious arguments to both parties.

Take care, said one, you are teaching man his rights, when he perceives them but too plainly himself; you are transporting him to a high mountain, and showing him his boundless empire. What will happen, when, on descending, he will find himself stopped by the special laws that you are going to make, when he will meet with boundaries at every step?‡

There was more than one answer, but certainly the strongest

\* And very voluntarily borrowed; since it was done by all the kings of Europe at the head of eight hundred thousand soldiers. They acknowledge that every people has the right of choosing its government. See *Alexandre de Lameth*, p. 121.

† Of right and liberty alone: nothing more at first in that charter of enfranchisement. I explain myself more fully in the Introduction, and in the other volumes.

‡ *Discours de Malouet*.



was the state of affairs. The crisis was then at its height, and the combat still doubtful. It was impossible to find too high a mountain whereon to fix the standard. It was necessary to place that flag, if possible, so high that the whole world might behold it, and that its tricolor streamer might rally the nations. Recognised as the common standard of humanity, it became invincible.

There are still people who think that grand discussion excited and armed the people, that it put the torch in their hand, and promoted warfare and conflagration. The first stumbling-block to that argument is, that the acts of violence began previous to the discussion. The peasants did not need metaphysical formula in order to rise in arms. Even afterwards it had but little influence. What armed the rural districts was, as we have already said, the necessity of putting down pillage; it was the contagion of the cities taking up arms; and, above all, it was the frenzy and enthusiasm caused by the taking of the Bastille.

The grandeur of that spectacle and the variety of its terrible incidents troubled the vision of history. It has mixed together and confounded three distinct and even opposite facts which were taking place at the same time.

1st. The excursions of the famished vagrants, who cut down the corn at night, and cleared the earth like locusts. Those bands, when strong, would break open lone houses, farms, and even castles.

2ndly. The peasant, in order to repel those bands, was in need of arms, and demanded and exacted them from the castles. Once armed and master, he destroyed the charters, in which he beheld an instrument of oppression. Woe to detested nobles! Then they did not attack his parchments alone, but his person also.

3rdly. The cities, the arming of which had brought about that of the rural districts, were obliged to repress them. The National Guards, who then had nothing aristocratical about them, since they comprehended everybody, marched forth to restore order; they went to the succour of those castles which they detested. They often brought the peasants back to town as prisoners, but soon released them.\*

\* All this is very much embroiled by historians, according to their passions. I have consulted old men, especially my illustrious and venerable friends MM. Béranger and de Lamennais.



I speak of the peasants domiciliated in the neighbourhood. As for the bands of lawless strollers, pillagers, and brigands, as they were called, the tribunals, and even the municipalities, often treated them with extreme severity : a great number of them were put to death. Security was at length restored, and agriculture protected. If the depredations had continued, cultivation must have ceased, and France would have been starved to death the following year.

A strange situation for an Assembly to be discussing, calculating, weighing syllables, at the summit of a world in flames. Danger on the right and on the left. To repress the disorder, they have, one would think, but one means : to restore the ancient order, which is but a worse disorder.

It is commonly supposed that they were impatient to lay hold of power ; that is true of certain of the members, but false, very false, with respect to the great majority. The character of that Assembly, considered in the mass, its originality, like that of the period, was a singular faith in the power of ideas. It firmly believed that truth, once found, and written in the formula of laws, was invincible. It would require but two months (such was the calculation, however, of very serious men), in two months the constitution was made ; it would, by its omnipotent virtue, overawe authority and the people : the Revolution was then completed, and the world was to bloom again.

Meanwhile, the position of affairs was truly singular ; Authority was in one place destroyed, in another very strong ; organised on such a point, in complete dissolution on another, feeble for general and regular action, though formidable still to corruption, intrigue, and perhaps to violence. The accounts of those latter years, which appeared later, sufficiently show what resources were possessed by the court, and how they employed them,—how they tampered with the press, the newspapers, and even with the Assembly. Emigration was beginning, and with it an appeal to foreigners,—to the enemy,—a persevering system of treason and calumny against France.

The Assembly felt it was sitting upon a volcano. For the general safety, it was obliged to descend from the heights where it was making laws, and take a nearer view of what was passing on the earth. A stupendous descent ! Solon,

Lycurgus, or Moses, debased to the miserable cares of public *surveillance*, forced to watch over spies, and become an inspector of police!

The first hint was given by Dorset's letters to Count d'Artois, by his still more alarming explanations, and the notice of the conspiracy of Brest, so long concealed by the court. On the 27th of July, Duport proposed to create a committee of inquiry, composed of four persons. He uttered these ominous words: "Allow me to refrain from entering into any discussion. Plots are forming. There must not be any question of sending before the tribunals. We must acquire horrible and indispensable information."

The number four reminded them too much of the three inquisitors of State. It was therefore raised to twelve.

The spirit of the Assembly, in spite of its necessities, was by no means one of police and inquisition. A very serious discussion took place as to whether the secrecy of letters was to be violated, whether they ought to open that suspected correspondence, addressed to a prince who, by his precipitate flight, declared himself an enemy. Gouy d'Arcy and Robespierre wished them to be opened. But the Assembly, on the opinion of Chapelier, Mirabeau, and even of Duport, who had just demanded a sort of State inquisition, magnanimously declared the secrecy of letters inviolable, refused to open them, and caused them to be restored.

This decision restored courage to the partisans of the court. They made three bold attempts. On Sieyès being proposed for president, they opposed to him the eminent legist of Rouen, Thouret, a man much esteemed, and very agreeable to the Assembly. His merit in their estimation was his having voted, on the 17th of June, against the title of *National Assembly*, that simple formula of Sieyès which contained the Revolution. To bring into opposition those two men, or rather those two systems, in the question of the presidency, was putting the Revolution on its trial, and attempting to see whether it could not be made to retrograde to the 16th of June.

The second attempt was to prevent the trial of Besenval. That general of the queen against Paris had been arrested in his flight. To judge and condemn him was to condemn

also the orders according to which he had acted. Necker, in returning, had seen him on his journey, and given him hopes. It was not difficult to obtain from his kind heart the promise of a solemn step to be taken with the city of Paris.\* To obtain a general amnesty, in the joy of his return, end the Revolution, restore tranquillity, and appear as after the deluge, the rainbow in the heavens, was most charming to the vanity of Necker.

He went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and obtained everything of those who happened to be there,—electors, representatives of districts, simple citizens, a mixed, confused multitude, without any legal character. The joy of the people was extreme, both in the hail and in the public square. He showed himself at the window, with his wife on his right, and his daughter on his left, both weeping and kissing his hands. His daughter, Madame de Staël, fainted with delight.†

That done, nothing was done. The districts of Paris justly protested; this clemency filched from an Assembly lost in emotion, granted in the name of Paris by a crowd without authority, a national question, settled at once by a single town,—by a few of its inhabitants,—and that at the moment the National Assembly was creating a committee of inquiry and preparing a tribunal,—this was unprecedented and audacious. In spite of Lally and Mounier, who defended the amnesty, Mirabeau, Barnave, and Robespierre obtained a decision for a trial. The court were again defeated; however, they had one great consolation, worthy of their usual wisdom: they had compromised Necker, and destroyed the popularity of the only man who had any chance of saving them.

The court failed in the same way in the affair of the Presidency. Thouret, alarmed at the exasperation of the people, and the menaces of Paris, retired.

A third and far more serious attempt of the royalist party was made by Malouet; this was one of the strangest and most dangerous trials that the Revolution had met with in her perillous route, where her enemies were every day laying stumbling-blocks, and digging pits at every step.

\* He says expressly that he was speaking in the name of the king. See his speech, *Hist. de la Révolution, par deux amis de la liberté*, ii., p. 235.

† Staël, *Considérations*, 1st part, cn. xxiii. See also Necker, t. vi., 12.

The reader may remember the day, when, before the Orders had yet united, the clergy had gone hypocritically to show the Third Estate the black bread which the people had to eat, and to engage them, in the name of charity, to lay aside useless disputes, in order to undertake with them the welfare of the poor. This is precisely what was done by Malouet, in other respects an honourable man, but a blind partisan of a royalty then all but destroyed.

He proposed to organise a vast *poor-rate*, bureaus for relief and work, the first funds of which should be furnished by the establishments of charity, the rest by a general tax on all, and by a loan—a noble and honourable proposal, countenanced at such a moment by pressing necessity, but giving the royalist party a formidable political initiative. It placed in the hands of the king a three-fold fund, the last portion of which, the loan, was unlimited; it made him the leader of the poor, perhaps the general of the beggars against the Assembly. It found him dethroned, and placed him upon a throne, far more absolute, more solid, by making him king of famine, reigning by what is most imperious, food and bread.

What became of liberty?

For the thing to create less alarm, and appear a mere trifle, Malouet lowered the number of the poor to four hundred thousand,—an amount evidently false.

If he did not succeed, he nevertheless derived a great advantage, that of giving his party, the king's, a fine colouring in the eyes of the people,—the glory of charity. The majority, which would be too much compromised by refusing, was about compulsorily to follow and obey, and to place that grand popular machine in the hands of the king.

Malouet proposed, lastly, to consult the Chambers of Commerce and the manufacturing towns, in order to aid the workmen, “to augment work and wages.”

A sort of opposition bidding was about to be established between the two parties. The question was to obtain or to bring back the people. The proposal of *giving* to the indigent could only be met by one to authorise workmen *to pay taxes no longer*,—one, at least, to authorise country labourers no longer to pay the most odious of taxes, the feudal tributes.

Those rights were in great jeopardy. In order to destroy

them the more effectually and annihilate the acts by which they were consecrated, they burned even the castles. The large proprietors, who were sitting in the Assembly, were full of uneasiness. A property so detested and so dangerous, which compromised all the rest of their fortune, began to appear to them a burden. To save those rights, it was necessary either to sacrifice a part, or to defend them by force of arms, rally all the friends, clients, and domestics they might possess, and begin a terrible war against the whole people.

Except an inconsiderable number of old men who had served in the Seven Years' War, and young men who had taken a part in that of America, our nobles had made no other campaigns than garrison evolutions. They were, however, individually brave in private quarrels. The petty nobles of Vendée and Brittany, till then so unknown, suddenly stood forth and showed themselves heroic. Many nobles and emigrants distinguished themselves also in the great wars of the empire. Perhaps, if they had acted in concert and rallied together, they might for some time have arrested the Revolution. It found them dispersed, isolated, and weak in their loneliness. Another cause of their weakness, very honourable for them, was, that many of them were in heart against themselves,—against the old feudal tyranny, and that they were at the same time its heirs and its enemies ; educated in the generous ideas of the philosophy of the time, they applauded that marvellous resuscitation of mankind, and offered up prayers for it, even though it cost their own ruin.

The richest *seigneur* in feudal properties, after the king, was the Duke d'Aiguillon.\* He possessed royal prerogatives in two provinces of the South : all of odious origin, and which his grand-uncle Richelieu had conferred upon himself. His father, the colleague of Terray, minister of bankruptcy, had been despised even more than he was detested. The young Duke d'Aiguillon felt the more keenly the necessity of making himself popular ; he was, with Duport and Chapelier, one of the leaders of the *Breton Club*. There he made the generous and political proposition of giving a portion to the fire in that great conflagration, to throw down a part of the building in order to

\* Alex. de Lameth, *Histoire de l'Assemblée Constituante*, i., p. 96.



save the rest ; he wished, not to sacrifice the feudal rights (many nobles had no other fortune), but to offer to the peasant to *purchase his exemption at a moderate price.*

Viscount de Noailles was not at the club, but he got scent of the proposal, and filched away the honour of being the first proposer. A younger son, and possessing no feudal rights, he was still more generous than the Duke d'Aiguillon. He proposed not only to permit a redemption from rights, but to *abolish without redemption* seigniorial statute-labour (*corvées*) and other personal bondage.

This was considered as an attack, a threat,—nothing more. About two hundred deputies applauded the proposition. They had just read a projected decree in which the Assembly reminded people of the duty of respecting properties, of paying rent, &c.

The Duke d'Aiguillon produced a very different effect. He said that in voting, on the preceding evening, rigorous measures against those who attacked the castles, a scruple had arisen in his mind, and he had asked himself whether those men were really guilty. And he continued to declaim warnly, violently, against feudal tyranny, that is to say, against himself.

That 4th of August, at eight in the evening, was a solemn hour in which feudality, after a reign of a thousand years, abdicates, abjures, and condemns itself.

Feudality has spoken. It is now the turn of the people. M. Le Guen de Kerengal, a Bas-Breton, in the costume of his country, an unknown deputy, who never spoke either before or after, ascends the tribune, and reads some twenty lines of an accusing, menacing character. He reproached the Assembly with singular energy and authority for not having prevented the burning of the castles, by breaking, said he, the cruel arms they contain,—those iniquitous acts which debase man to the brute, which yoke man and beast to the plough, which outrage decency. “ Let us be just ; let them bring to us those titles, monuments of the barbarity of our fathers. Who among us would not make an expiatory pile to burn those infamous parchments ? You have not a moment to lose ; a delay of one day occasions new conflagrations ; the downfall of empires is announced with far less uproar. Would you give laws only to



France in Ruins ?” This made a deep impression. Another Breton did but weaken it by calling to mind several strange, cruel, incredible rights : the right that the lord of the manor had had to cut open the bellies of two of his vassals on returning from hunting, and of thrusting his feet into their bleeding bodies !

A provincial nobleman, M. de Foucault, making an attack on the great lords who had begun this lamentable discussion, demanded that, before anything else, the great should sacrifice their pensions and salaries,—the prodigious donations they drew from the king, doubly ruining the people, both by the money they extorted, and by the neglect into which the province fell, all the rich following their example, deserting their lands, and crowding about the court. MM. de Guiche and de Montemart believed the attack to be personal, and replied sharply that the persons alluded to would sacrifice everything.

Enthusiasm gained ground. M. de Beauharnais proposed that penalties should henceforth be the same for all, nobles and plebeians, and employments open to all. One asked for gratuitous justice ; another, for the abolition of seigneurial justice, the inferior agents of which were the scourge of the rural districts.

M. de Custine said that the conditions of redemption proposed by the Duke d’Aiguillon were difficult, that those difficulties ought to be removed, and succour granted to the peasant.

M. de la Rochefoucault, extending the benevolence of France to the human race, demanded an amelioration for negro slavery.

Never did the French character shine forth more charmingly in its benevolence, vivacity, and generous enthusiasm. These men who had required so much time and study to discuss the Declaration of Rights, counting and weighing every syllable, having now an appeal made to their disinterestedness, replied unhesitatingly ; they trod money under foot, and those rights of nobility which they loved more than money. A grand example which the expiring nobility bequeathed to our citizen aristocracy !

Amid the general enthusiasm and emotion, there was also a proud carelessness, the vivacity of a noble gamester who takes delight in flinging down his gold. All those sacrifices were

made by rich and poor, with equal good humour, sometimes with archness (like Foucault's motion), and lively sallies.

"And what have I to offer?" said Count de Virieu "At least the sparrow of Catullus." He proposed the destruction of the destroying pigeons, of the feudal dove-cot.

The young Montmorency demanded that all those prayers should be immediately converted into laws. Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau desired that the people should immediately enjoy those benefits. Himself immensely rich, he wished that the rich, the nobles, the exempt from taxes, should assess themselves for this purpose.

Chapelier, the president, on being pressed to put the question to the vote, archly observed that none of *Messieurs* the clergy having yet been able to obtain a hearing, he should have to reproach himself with having shut them out from the tribune.\*

The Bishop of Nancy then expressed, in the name of the ecclesiastical lords, a wish that the price of redemption from feudal rights should not accrue to the present possessor, but be invested as funds useful to the benefice itself.†

This was economy and husbandry rather than generosity. The Bishop of Chartres, a sensible man, who spoke next, found a way of being generous at the expense of the nobility. He sacrificed the game rights (*droits de chasse*), very important for the nobles, but of little value for the clergy.

The nobles did not shrink; they demanded the consummation of this renunciation. Several were reluctant. The Duke du Châtelet said, smiling at his neighbours: "The bishop deprives us of hunting; I will take away his tithes." And he proposed that tithes in kind should be converted into pecuniary dues redeemable at pleasure.

The clergy allowed those dangerous words to fall without observation, and followed their usual tactics of putting forward the nobility; the archbishop of Aix spoke forcibly against

\* Omitted in the *Moniteur* and the *Histoire Parlementaire*. See the *Histoire des deux Amis de la Liberté*, ii., p. 321.

† Arranged and disfigured in the *Moniteur* and the historians who wish to conceal the egotism of the clergy. The *Procès-verbal* says only: He adhered, in his own name and in the name of several members of the clergy, to this system of redeeming the feudal rights, by submitting (by the incumbents) to the lodging and use of the funds arising from them.—*Archives du Royaume. Procès-verbaux de l'Assemblée Nationale*. 4 Août, '89. B. 2.

feudality, demanding that in future every kind of feudal convention should be prohibited.

"I wish I had land," said the Bishop of Uzès, "I should delight in giving it into the hands of the labourers. But we are only depositaries."

The Bishop of Nîmes and Montpellier gave nothing, but demanded that the artisans and labourers should be exempt from charges and taxation.

The poorer ecclesiastics were alone generous. Some *curés* declared that their conscience did not allow them to have more than one benefice. Others said: "We offer our fees." Dupont objected that the deficiency must then be made up to them. The Assembly was affected, and refused to accept the widow's mite.

Emotion and enthusiasm had gradually increased to an extraordinary degree. Nothing was heard in the Assembly but applause, congratulations, and expressions of mutual benevolence. Foreigners, present at that meeting, were struck with astonishment; then, for the first time, they beheld France, and all the goodness of her heart. What ages of struggles had not effected in their countries, she had just done in a few hours by disinterestedness and sacrifice. Money and pride trodden under foot, together with the old hereditary tyranny, antiquity, tradition itself,—the monstrous feudal oak, felled by one blow,—that accursed tree, whose branches covered the whole earth with a deadly shade, whilst its innumerable roots shot forth into the obscurest regions, probing and absorbing life, preventing it from rising to the light of day.

Everything seemed finished. But a scene no less grand was then beginning.

After the privileges of classes, came those of provinces. Such as were called state provinces (*pays d'état*), which had privileges of their own, divers advantages for liberties and taxation, were ashamed of their egotism; they wanted to be France, in spite of what it might cost their personal interest and their old fond reminiscences.

As early as 1788, Dauphiné had magnanimously offered to surrender its privileges, and advised the other provinces to do the same. It renewed that offer. The most obstinate, the Bretons, though bound by their mandates, and tied down by

the ancient treaties of their province with France, nevertheless manifested the desire of uniting. Provence said the same, next Burgundy and Bresse, Normandy, Poitou, Auvergne, and Artois. Lorraine, in affecting language, said that it would not regret the domination of its adored sovereigns who were the fathers of the people, if it had the happiness of uniting with its brethren, and of entering with them all together into the maternal mansion of France,—into that vast and glorious family.

Next came the turn of the cities. Their deputies came in crowds to lay their privileges upon the altar of their native land.

The officers of justice were unable to pierce the crowd surrounding the tribune, to bring their tribute. A member of the Parliament of Paris imitated their example, renouncing the hereditary succession of offices,—transmissible nobility.

The archbishop of Paris demanded that they should remember God on that great day, and sing a *Te Deum*.

“But the king, gentlemen,” said Lally, “the king who has convoked us after the long lapse of two centuries, shall he not have his reward? Let us proclaim him the restorer of French liberty!”

The night was far advanced: it was two o’clock. That night dispelled for ever the long and painful dream of the thousand years of the middle ages. The approaching dawn was that of liberty!

Since that marvellous night, no more classes, but Frenchmen; no more provinces, but one France!

God save France!

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CLERGY AND THE PEOPLE.

Prophetic Speeches of Fauchet.—Powerless Efforts for Reconciliation.—Imminent Ruin of the Ancient Church.—The Church had abandoned the People.—Buzot claims the Estates of the Clergy for the Nation, August 6th.—Suppression of Tithes, August 11th.—Religious Liberty acknowledged.—League of the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Court.—Paris abandoned to itself.—No Public Authority, few Acts of Violence.—Patriotic Donations.—Devotion and Sacrifice.—(August, 1789.)

THE resurrection of the people who at length burst their sepulchre, feudality itself rolling away the stone by which it

had kept them immured, the work of ages in one night, such was the first miracle—the divine and authentic miracle—of this new Gospel!

How applicable here are those words pronounced by Fauchet over the skeletons found in the Bastille! “Tyranny had sealed them within the walls of those dungeons which she believed to be eternally impenetrable to the light. *The day of revelation is come!* The bones have arisen at the voice of French liberty; they depose against centuries of oppression and death, prophesying the regeneration of human nature, and the life of nations!”\*

Noble language of a true prophet. Let us cherish it in our hearts, as the treasure of hope. Yes, they will rise again! The resurrection begun on the ruins of the Bastille, continued through the night of the 4th of August, will display in the light of social life those crowds still languishing in the shadows of death. Day dawned in '89; next, the morn arose shrouded in storms; then, a dark, total eclipse. The sun will yet shine out. “*Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?*”

It was two hours after midnight when the Assembly concluded its important work, and separated. In the morning (August 5th), Fauchet was making, at Paris, his funeral oration over the citizens killed before the Bastille. Those martyrs of liberty had just gained, that very night, in the destruction of the great feudal Bastille, their palm, and the price of their blood.

Fauchet there found once more words worthy of eternal remembrance: “How those false interpreters of divine oracles have injured the world! They have consecrated despotism, and made God the accomplice of tyrants. What says the Gospel? ‘You will have to appear before kings; they will order you to act unrighteously, and you shall resist them till death.’ False doctors triumph, because it is written: *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.* But must they also give unto Cæsar what is not Cæsar’s? Now liberty is not Cæsar’s; it belongs to human nature.”

\* Printed at the end of Dussaulx’s *Œuvre des Sept Jours*. He says admirably on another occasion: “We have reached the middle of time. Tyrants are ripe.” See his three speeches on liberty, spoken at Saint-Jacques, Sainte-Marguerite, and Notre-Dame.



Those eloquent words were still more so in the mouth of him who, on the 14th of July, had shown himself doubly heroic by courage and humanity. Twice had he attempted, at the peril of his life, to save the lives of others, and stop the effusion of blood. A true Christian and true citizen, he had wished to save all, both men and doctrines. His blind charity defended at the same time ideas hostile to one another, and contradictory dogmas. He united the two Gospels in one bond of love, without any attention to the difference of their principles, or to their opposite characters. Spurned and excluded by the priests, he looked upon what had caused his persecution as something, for that very reason, that he ought to respect and cherish. Who has not fallen into the very same error? Who has not cherished the hope of saving the past by hastening the future? Who would not have wished to quicken the spirit without killing the old form?—to rekindle the flame without molesting the dead ashes? Vain endeavour! In vain would we withhold our breath. It expands in the air, and flies to the four quarters of the world.

Who was then able to see all that? Fauchet was mistaken, and so were many others. They endeavoured to believe the struggle ended, and peace restored; they wondered to find that the Revolution had been already in the Gospel. The heart of every one who heard those glorious words leaped with joy. The impression was so strong, the emotion so poignant, that they crowned the apostle of liberty with a civic wreath. The people and the armed population, the conquerors of the Bastille and the citizen guard, with drums beating in front, led him back to the Hôtel-de-Ville; a herald carried a crown before him.

Was this the last triumph of the priest, or the first of the citizen? Will those two characters, here confounded, be able to blend together? The tattered raiment, glorified by the balls of the Bastille, allow us here to perceive the new man; in vain would he extend that robe in order to cover the past.

A new creed is advancing towards us, and two others are departing (how can it be helped?)—the Church and Royalty.

Of the three branches of the antique oak,—Feudality, Royalty, Church,—the first fell on the 4th of August; the two others totter to and fro; I hear a loud wind in the branches; they struggle, and resist strongly; their leaves are scattered



on the ground ; nothing can withstand that storm. Let what is doomed perish !

No regret, no useless tears ! Gracious God ! how long had that which imagines it is now dying, been sterile, dead and useless !

What bears an overwhelming testimony against the Church ✓ in '89, is the state of utter neglect in which she had left the people. For two thousand years she alone had the duty of instructing them ; and how had she performed it ? What was the end and aim of the pious foundations in the middle ages ? What duties did they impose on the clergy ? The salvation of souls, their religious improvement, the softening of manners, the humanising of the people. They were your disciples, and given to you alone. Masters, what have you taught them ?

Ever since the twelfth century, you have continued to speak to them a language no longer theirs, and the form of worship has ceased to be a mode of instructing them. The deficiency was supplied by preaching ; but gradually it became silent, or spoke for the rich alone. You have neglected the poor, disdained the coarse mob. Coarse ? Yes, through you. Through you, two people exist : the upper, civilised and refined to excess ; the lower, rude and savage, much further removed from the other than in the beginning. It was your duty to fill up the interval, to be ever raising the lowly, and of the two to make one people. Now the crisis has come ; and I see no cultivation acquired, no softening of manners among the classes of which you made yourselves the masters ; what they possess, they have naturally, from the instinct of Nature, from the sap that she implants within us. The good is innate ; and to whom must I attribute the evil, the anarchy, but to those who were answerable for their souls, and yet abandoned them ?

In '89, what are your famous monasteries, your antique schools ? The abode of idleness and silence. Grass grows there, and the spider spins her web. And your pulpits ? Mute. And your books ? Empty.

The eighteenth century passes away, an age of attacks, in which, from time to time, your adversaries summon you in vain to speak and to act, if you be still alive.

One thing alone might be urged in your defence ; many of you believe it, though not one will avow it. It is, that, for a long time past, doctrine was exhausted, that you no

longer said anything to the people, having nothing to say, that you had lived your ages, an age of teaching,—an age of disputation—that everything passes and changes; the heavens themselves will pass away. Powerfully attached to outward forms, unable to separate the spirit from them, not daring to aid the phoenix to die to live again, you remained dumb and inactive in the sanctuary, occupying the place of the priest. But the priest was no longer there.

Depart from the temple. You were there for the people, to give them light. Go, your lamp is extinct. They who built those churches, and lent them to you, now demand them. Who were they? The France of those times; restore them to the France of to-day.

To-day (August, '89,) France takes back the tithes, and to-morrow (November 2nd), she will take back the estates.✓ By what right? A great juriconsult has said: "By the right of *disherison*." The dead church has no heirs. To whom does her patrimony revert? To her author, to that PATRIA, whence the new church shall rise.

On the 6th of August, when the Assembly had been long discussing a loan proposed by Necker, and which, as he confessed, would not suffice for two months, a man who till then had seldom spoken, suddenly ascended the tribune; this time he said but these words: "The ecclesiastical estates belong to the nation."

Loud murmurs. The man who had so frankly stated the position of things was Buzot, one of the leaders of the future Gironde party: his youthful, austere, fervent, yet melancholy countenance,\* was one of those which bear impressed upon their brow the promise of a short destiny.

The attempted loan failed, was again proposed, and at length carried. It had been difficult to get it voted, and it was more difficult to get it completed. To whom were the public going to lend? To the *ancien régime* or the Revolution? Nobody yet knew. A thing more sure, and clear to every mind, was the uselessness of the clergy, their perfect unworthiness, and the incontestable right that the nation had to the ecclesiastical estates. Everybody was acquainted with the morals of the pre-

\* See a description of him in the *Mémoires* of Madame Roland, t. ii.

lates and the ignorance of the inferior clergy. The *curés* possessed some virtues, a few instincts of resistance, but no information; wherever they ruled they were an obstacle to every improvement of the people, and caused them to retrograde. To quote but one example, Poitou, civilised in the sixteenth century, became barbarous under their influence; they were preparing for us the civil war of Vendée.

The nobility saw this as plainly as the people; in their resolutions they demand a more useful employment of such and such church estates. The kings also had plainly seen it; several times they had made partial reforms, the reform of the Templars, that of the Lazarists, and that of the Jesuits. There remained something better to be done.

It was a member of the nobility, the Marquis de Lacoste, who, on the 8th of August, was the first to propose in precise formula: 1st. The ecclesiastical estates belong to the nation. 2dly. Tithes are suppressed (no mention of redeeming them). 3rdly. The titularies are pensioned. 4thly. The salaries of the bishops and curates shall be determined by the provincial Assemblies.

Another noble, Alexandre de Lameth, supported the proposition by lengthened reflections on the matter and the right of foundations, a right so well examined already by Turgot as early as 1750, in the *Encyclopédie*. "Society," said Lameth, "may always suppress every noxious institution." He concluded by giving the ecclesiastical estates in pledge to the creditors of the State.

All this was attacked by Grégoire and Lanjuinais. The Jansenists, though persecuted by the clergy, did not the less defend them.

This is most remarkable, as it shows that privilege is very tenacious, even more so than the tunic of Nessus, and could not be torn off without tearing away the flesh! The greatest minds in the Assembly, Sieyès and Mirabeau, absent on the night of the 4th of August, deplored its results. Sieyès was a priest, and Mirabeau a noble. Mirabeau would have wished to defend the nobility and the king, unhesitatingly sacrificing the clergy. Sieyès defended the clergy sacrificed by the nobility.\*

\* He attempts to justify this, in his *Notice* on his life, but does not succeed.

He said that tithes were a real property. How so? By their having been at first a voluntary gift, a valid donation. To which they were able to reply in the terms of law, that a donation is revocable *for cause of ingratitude*, for the forgetting or neglecting the end for which it was given; that end was the instruction of the people, so long abandoned by the clergy.

Sic'yès urged adroitly that, in every case, tithes could not benefit the present possessors, who had purchased with the knowledge, prevision, and deduction of the tithes. This would be, said he, to make them a present of an income of seventy millions (of francs). The tithes were worth more than a hundred and thirty. To give them to the proprietors, was an eminently political measure, engaging for ever the cultivator, the firmest element of the people, in the cause of the Revolution.

That onerous, odious impost, variable according to the provinces, which often amounted to one-third of the harvest! which caused war between the priest and the labourer, which obliged the former, in harvest-time, to make a contemptible investigation, was nevertheless defended by the clergy, for three whole days, with obstinate violence. "What!" exclaimed a *curé*, "when you invited us to come and join you, *in the name of the God of peace!* was it to cut our throats!" So tithes were then their very life,—what they held most precious. On the third day, seeing everybody against them, they made the sacrifice. Some fifteen or twenty *curés* renounced, throwing themselves on the generosity of the nation. The great prelates, the Archbishop of Paris, and Cardinal De Larochehoucauld, followed that example, and renounced, in the name of the clergy. Tithes were abolished without redemption *for the future*, but maintained for the present, till provision had been made for the support of the pastors (August 11th).

The resistance of the clergy could not be availing. They had almost the whole Assembly against them. Mirabeau spoke three times; he was more than usually bold, haughty, and often ironical, yet using respectful language. He knew well the assent he must meet with both in the Assembly and among the people. The grand theses of the eighteenth century were reproduced, as things consented to, admitted beforehand, and incontestable. Voltaire returned there, a terrible, rapid con-

queror. Religious liberty was consecrated, in the Declaration of Rights, and not *tolerance*, a ridiculous term, which supposes a right to tyranny. That of *predominant* religion, *predominant* worship, which the clergy demanded, was treated as it deserved. The great orator, in this the organ both of the century and of France, put this word under the ban of every legislation. "If you write it," said he, "have also a *predominant* philosophy, and *predominant* systems. Nothing ought to be predominant but right and justice."

Those who know by history, by the study of the middle ages, the prodigious tenacity of the clergy in defending their least interest, may easily judge what efforts they would now make to save their possessions, and their most precious possession, their cherished intolerance.

One thing gave them courage ; which is, that the provincial nobility, the Parliament people, all the *ancien régime*, had sided with them in their common resistance to the resolutions of the 4th of August. More than one who, on that night, proposed or supported them, was beginning to repent.

That such resolutions should have been taken by their representatives,—by nobles, was more than the privileged classes could comprehend. They remained confounded, beside themselves with astonishment. The peasants who had commenced by violence, now continued by the authority of the law. It was the law that was levelling, throwing down the barriers, breaking the seigneurial boundary, defacing escutcheons, and opening the chase throughout France to people in arms. All armed, all sportsmen, and all nobles ! And this very law which seemed to ennoble the people and *disennoble* the nobility, had been voted by the nobles themselves !

If privilege was perishing, the privileged classes, the nobles and priests, preferred to perish also ; they had for a long time become identified and incorporated within equality and intolerance. Rather die a hundred times than cease to be unjust !  
 ✓ They could accept nothing of the Revolution, neither its principle, written in its Declaration of Rights, nor the application of that principle in its great social charter of the 4th of August. However irresolute the king might be, his religious scruples caused him to be on their side, and guaranteed his obstinacy. He would, perhaps, have consented to a diminution



of the regal power ; but tithes—that sacred property—and then the jurisdiction of the clergy, *their right of ascertaining secret transgressions*, disavowed by the Assembly, and the liberty of religious opinions proclaimed, that timorous prince could not admit.

They might be sure that Louis XVI. would, of his own accord, and without needing any outward impulse, reject, or at least attempt to elude, the Declaration of Rights, and the decrees of the 4th of August.

But between that and his being made to act and fight, the distance was still great. He abhorred bloodshed. It might be possible to place him in such a position as to oblige him to make war ; but to obtain it directly, or to get from him resolution or order, was what nobody could ever think of.

The queen had no assistance to expect from her brother Joseph, too much occupied about his Belgium. From Austria she received nothing but counsels, those of the ambassador, M. Mercy d'Argenteau. The troops were not sure. What she possessed, was a very great number of officers, of the navy and others, and Swiss and German regiments. For her principal forces, she had an excellent select army of from twenty-five to thirty thousand troops in Metz and its environs, under M. de Bouillé, a devoted, resolute officer, who had given proofs of great vigour. He had kept those troops in severe discipline, inculcating in them aversion and contempt for citizens and the mob.

The queen's opinion had ever been to depart, to throw themselves into M. de Bouillé's camp, and begin a civil war.

Being unable to prevail upon the king, what remained but to wait, to wear out Necker, to compromise him ; to wear out Bailly and Lafayette, to allow disorder and anarchy to continue ; to see whether the people, whom they supposed to act by the instigation of others, would not grow tired of their leaders who left them to die of hunger. The excess of their miseries must at length calm, wear out, and dispirit them. They expected from day to day, to see them ask for the restoration of the *ancien régime*, the good old time, and entreat the king to resume his absolute authority.

“ You had bread, when under the king: now that you have twelve hundred kings, go and ask them for some ! ” These



words, attributed to a minister of those days,\* were, whether uttered or not, the opinion of the court.

This policy was but too well aided by the sad state of Paris. It is a terrible but certain fact, that, in that city of eight hundred thousand souls, there was no public authority for the space of three months, from July to October.

*No municipal power:*—That primitive, elementary authority of societies was as it were dissolved. The sixty districts used to discuss but did nothing. Their representatives at the Hôtel-de-Ville were just as inactive. Only, they impeded the mayor, prevented Bailly from acting. The latter, a studious man, recently an astronomer and academician, quite unprepared for his new character, always remained closeted in the *bureau des subsistances*, uneasy, and never knowing whether he could provision Paris.

*No police:*—It was in the powerless hands of Bailly. The lieutenant of police had given in his resignation, and was not replaced.

*No justice:*—The old criminal justice was suddenly found to be so contrary to ideas and manners, and appeared so barbarous, that M. de Lafayette demanded its immediate reform. The judges were obliged to change their old customs suddenly, learn new forms, and follow a more humane but also a more dilatory mode of procedure. The prisons became full, and crowded to excess; what was henceforth the most to be feared, was to be left there and forgotten.

*No more corporation authorities:*—The deans, syndics, &c., and the regulations of trades, were paralysed and annulled by the simple effect of the 4th of August. The most jealous of the trades, those the access to which had till then been difficult; the butchers, whose shambles were a sort of fief; the printers, and the peruke-makers, multiplied exceedingly. Printing, it is true, was increasing to an immense extent. The peruke-makers, on the contrary, beheld at the same time their number increasing, and their customers disappearing. All the rich were leaving Paris. A journal, affirms that in three months sixty thousand passports were signed at the Hôtel-de-Ville.†

\* See the partial but curious article *Saint-Priest*, in the *Biographie Michaud*, evidently written from information given by his family.

† *Révolutions de Paris*, t. ii., No. 9, p. 8.

Vast crowds of perukemakers, tailors, and shoemakers, used to assemble at the Louvre and in the Champs Élysées. The National Guard would go and disperse them, sometimes roughly and unceremoniously. They used to address complaints and demands to the town impossible to be granted,—to maintain the old regulations, or else make new ones, to fix the price of daily wages, &c. The servants, left out of place by the departure of their masters, wanted to have all the Savoyards sent back to their country.

What will always astonish those who are acquainted with the history of other revolutions is, that in this miserable and famished state of Paris, denuded of all authority, there were on the whole but very few serious acts of violence. One word, one reasonable observation, occasionally a jest, was sufficient to check them. On the first days only, subsequent to the 14th of July, there were instances of violence committed. The people, full of the idea that they were betrayed, sought for their enemies haphazard, and were near making some cruel mistakes. M. de Lafayette interposed several times at the critical moment, and was attended to: he saved several persons.\*

When I think of the times that followed, of our own time, so listless and interested, I cannot help wondering that extreme misery did not in the least dispirit this people, nor drew from them one regret for their ancient slavery. They could suffer and fast. The grand deed achieved in so short a time, the oath at the Jeu-de-Paume, the taking of the Bastille, the night of the 4th of August, had exalted their courage, and inspired everybody with a new idea of human dignity. Necker, who had departed on the 11th of July, and returned three weeks after, no longer recognised the same people. Dussaulx, who had passed sixty years under the *ancien régime*, can find old France nowhere. Everything is changed, says he, deportment, cos-

\* On those occasions, M. de Lafayette was truly admirable. He found in his heart, in his love for order and justice, words and happy sayings above his nature, which was, we must say, rather ordinary. Just as he was endeavouring to save Abbé Cordier, whom the people mistook for another, a friend was conducting Lafayette's young son to the Hôtel-de-Ville. He seized the opportunity, and turning towards the crowd: "Gentlemen," said he, "I have the honour to present you my son." The crowd, lost in surprise and emotion, stopped short. Lafayette's friends led the abbé into the Hôtel and he was saved. See his *Mémoires*, ii., p. 264.

tume, the appearance of the streets, and the signs. The convents are full of soldiers ; and stalls are turned into guard-houses. Everywhere are young men performing military exercises ; the children try to imitate them, and follow them, stepping to time. Men of fourscore are mounting guard with their great-grandchildren : “ Who would have believed,” say they to me, “ that we should be so happy as to die free men ? ”

A thing little noticed is, that in spite of certain acts of violence of the people, their sensibility had increased ; they no longer beheld with *sang froid* those atrocious punishments which under the old government had been a spectacle for them. At Versailles, a man was going to be broken on the wheel as a parricide ; he had raised a knife against a woman, and his father throwing himself between them, had been killed by the blow. The people thought the punishment still more barbarous than the act, prevented the execution, and overthrew the scaffold.

The heart of man had expanded by the youthful warmth of our Revolution. It beat quicker, was more impassioned than ever, more violent, and more generous. Every meeting of the Assembly presented the touching, interesting spectacle of patriotic donations which people brought in crowds. The National Assembly was obliged to become banker and receiver ; there they came for everything, and sent everything, petitions, donations, and complaints. Its narrow enclosure was, as it were, the mansion of France. The poor especially would give. Now, it was a young man who sent his savings, six hundred francs, painfully amassed. Then, again, poor artisans' wives, who brought whatever they had,—their jewels and ornaments that they had received at their marriage. A husbandman came to declare that he gave a certain quantity of corn. A schoolboy offered a purse collected and sent to him by his parents, his New-year's gift perhaps, his little reward. Donations of children and women, generosity of the poor, the widow's mite, so small, and yet so great before their native land !—before God !

Amid the commotion of ambition and dissension, and the moral sufferings under which it laboured, the Assembly was affected and transported beyond itself by this magnanimity of the people. When M. Necker came to expose the misery and

destitution of France, and to solicit, in order to live at least two months longer, a loan of thirty millions, several deputies proposed that he should be guaranteed by their estates,—by those of the members of the Assembly. M. de Foucault, like a true nobleman, made the first proposition, and offered to pledge six hundred thousand francs, which constituted his whole fortune.

A sacrifice far greater than any sacrifice of money, is that which all, both rich and poor, made for the public welfare,—that of their time, their constant thoughts, and all their activity. The municipalities then forming, the departmental administrations which were soon organized, absorbed the citizen entirely, and without exception. Several of them had their beds carried into the offices, and worked day and night.\*

To the fatigue add also the danger. The suffering crowds were ever distrustful; they blamed and threatened. The treachery of the old administration caused the new one to be treated with suspicion. It was at the peril of their lives that those new magistrates worked for the salvation of France.

But the poor! Who can tell the sacrifices of the poor? At night, the poor man mounted guard; in the morning, at four or five o'clock, he took his turn (*à la queue*) at the baker's door; and late, very late, he got his bread. The day was partly lost, and the workshop shut. Why do I say workshop? They were almost all closed. Why do I say the baker? Bread was wanting, and still more often the money to buy bread. Sorrowful and fasting, the unfortunate being wandered about, crawled along the streets, preferring to be abroad to hearing at home the complaints and sobs of his children. Thus the man who had but his time and his hands wherewith to gain his living and feed his family, devoted them in preference to the grand business of public welfare. It caused him to forget his own.

O noble, generous nation! Why must we be so imperfectly acquainted with that heroic period? The terrible, violent, heart-rending deeds which followed, have caused a world of sacrifices which characterised the outset of the Revolution to

\* As did the administrators of Finistère. See, for what relates to this truly admirable activity, Duchatellier's *Révolution en Bretagne, passim*.

be forgotten. A phenomenon more grand than any political event then appeared in the world ; that power of man, by which man is God—the power of sacrifice had augmented.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE VETO.

Difficulty of procuring Provisions.—The urgent State of Things.—Can the King check everything?—Long Discussion on the *Veto*.—Secret Projects of the Court.—Is there to be one Chamber or two?—The English School.—The Assembly required to be dissolved and renewed.—It was heterogeneous, discordant, and powerless.—Discordant Principles of Mirabeau.—His Impotency. (August-September, 1789).

THE situation was growing worse and worse. France, between two systems, the old and the new, tossed about without advancing ; and she was starving.

Paris, we must say, was living at the mercy of chance. Its subsistence, ever uncertain, depended on some arrival or other, on a convoy from Beauce or a boat from Corbeil. The city, at immense sacrifices, was lowering the price of bread ; the consequence was, that the population of the whole environs, for more than ten leagues round, came to procure provisions at Paris. The question was therefore to feed a vast country. The bakers found it advantageous to sell at once to the peasant, and afterwards, when the Parisians found their shops empty, they laid the blame on the administration for not provisioning Paris. The uncertainty of the morrow, and vain alarms, further augmented the number of difficulties ; everybody reserved, stored up, and concealed provisions. The administration, put to its last resources, sent in every direction, and bought up by fair means or by force. Occasionally, loads of flour on the road were seized and detained on their passage by the neighbouring localities whose wants were pressing. Versailles and Paris shared together ; but Versailles kept, so it was said, the finest part, and made a superior bread. This was a great cause of jealousy. One day, when the people of Versailles had been so imprudent as to turn aside for themselves a supply intended for the Parisians, Bailly, the honest



and respectful Bailly, wrote to M. Necker, that if the flour was not restored, thirty thousand men would go and fetch it on the morrow. Fear made him bold. His head was in danger if provisions failed. It often happened that at midnight he had but the half of the flour necessary for the morning market.\*

The provisioning of Paris was a kind of war. The national guard was sent to protect such an arrival, or to secure certain purchases; purchases were made by force of arms. Being incommoded in their trade, the farmers would not thrash any longer, neither would the millers grind any more. The speculators were afraid. A pamphlet by Camille Desmoulins designated and threatened the brothers Leleu, who had the monopoly of the royal mills at Corbeil. Another, who passed for the principal agent of a company of monopolists, killed himself, or was killed, in a forest near Paris. His death brought about his immense frightful bankruptcy, of more than fifty millions of francs. It is not unlikely, that the court, who had large sums lodged in his hands, suddenly drew them to pay a multitude of officers who were invited to Versailles, and perhaps to be carried off to Metz: without money they could not begin the civil war. This was already war against Paris, and the very worst perhaps, from their keeping the town in such a state of peace. No work,—and famine!

“I used to see,” says Bailly, “good tradespeople, mereers and goldsmiths, who prayed to be admitted among the beggars employed at Montmartre in digging the ground. Judge what I suffered.” He did not suffer enough. We see him, even in his *Mémoires*, too much taken up with petty vanities—questions of precedence, to know by what honorary forms the speech for the consecration of the flags should begin, &c.

Neither did the National Assembly suffer enough from the sufferings of the people. Otherwise it would not have prolonged the eternal debate of its political *scolastique*. It would have understood that it ought to hasten on the movement of reforms, remove every obstacle, and abridge that mortal transition where France remained between the old order and the new. Everybody saw the question, yet the Assembly saw it not. Though endowed with generally good intentions and vast

\* *Mémoires de Bailly, passim.*



information, it seemed to have but little perception of the real state of things. Impeded in its progress by the opposition of its royalist and aristocratic members, it was still more so by those habits of the bar or of the Academy, which its most illustrious members, men of letters or advocates, still preserved.

It was necessary to insist and obtain at once, at any price, without wasting time in talking, the sanction of the decrees of the 4th of August, and to bury the feudal world; it was necessary to deduce from those general decrees political laws, and those administrative laws which should determine the application of the former; that is to say, to organise, to arm the Revolution, to give it form and power, and make it a living being. As such it became less dangerous than by being left floating, overflowing, vague, and terrible, like an element,—like a flood, or a conflagration.

It was especially necessary to use dispatch. It was a thunderbolt for Paris to learn that the Assembly was occupied only with the inquiry whether it would recognise in the King the *absolute right of preventing* (absolute veto), or the *right of adjourning*, of suspending for two years, four years, or six years. For such pressing, mortal evils, this prospect was despair itself, a condemnation without appeal. Four years, six years, good God! for people who knew not whether they should live till the morrow.

Far from progressing, the Assembly was evidently receding. It made two retrograde and sadly significant choices. It appointed for president La Luzerne, the bishop of Langres, a partisan of the *veto*, and next Mounier, once more a partisan of the *veto*.

The warmth with which the people espoused this question has been treated with derision. Several, so it was stated, believed that the *veto* was a person, or a tax.\* There is nothing laughable in this but the sneerers themselves. Yes, the *veto* was equal to a tax, if it prevented reforms and a diminution of the taxes. Yes, the *veto* was eminently personal; a man had but to say, *I forbid*, without any reason; it was quite enough.

M. de Sèze thought to plead skilfully for this cause, by

\* See Ferreres, Molleville Beaulieu, &c.

saying that the question was not about a person, but *a permanent will*, more steady than any Assembly.

Permanent? According to the influence of courtiers, confessors, mistresses, passions, and interests. Supposing it permanent, that will may be very personal and very oppressive, if, whilst everything is changing about it, it neither change nor improve. How will it be if one same policy, one self-same interest, pass on with generation and tradition throughout a whole dynasty?

The resolutions (*cahiers*) written under very different circumstances granted to the King the sanction and the refusal of sanction. France had trusted to the kingly power against the privileged classes. But were those resolutions to be followed now that same power was their auxiliary? They might as well restore the Bastille.

The sheet-anchor left with the privileged classes was the royal *veto*. They hugged and embraced the King in their shipwreck, wishing him to share their fate, and be saved or drowned with them.

The Assembly discussed the question as if it had been a mere struggle of systems. Paris perceived in it less a question than a crisis, the grand crisis and the total cause of the Revolution, which it was necessary to save or destroy: *To be or not to be*, nothing less.

And Paris alone was right. The revelations of history, and the confessions of the court party, authorise us now in this decision. The 14th of July had wrought no change; the true minister was Breteuil, the Queen's confidant. Necker was there only for show. The Queen was ever looking forward to flight and civil war; her heart was at Metz, in Bouillé's camp. Bouillé's sword was the only *veto* that pleased her.

The Assembly might have been supposed not to have perceived there was a Revolution. Most of the speeches would have served just as well for another century or any other people. One alone will live, that of M. Sièyes, who rejected the *veto*. He stated perfectly well that the real remedy for the reciprocal encroachments of the powers, was not thus to constitute the executive power an arbiter and a judge, but to make an appeal to the constituent power which is in the people. An Assembly may be mistaken; but how many more

chances has not the irrevocable depositary of an hereditary power of being mistaken, wittingly or unwittingly, of following some dynastie or family interest?

He defined the *veto* a simple *lettre-de-cachet* flung by one individual against the general will.

One sensible thing was said by another deputy, which is, that if the Assembly were divided into two Chambers, each having a *veto*, there would be little fear of an abuse of the legislative power; consequently, it was not necessary to oppose to it a new barrier, by giving the *veto* to the King.

There were five hundred votes for a single Chamber; and the dividing into two Chambers could obtain only one hundred. The multitude of nobles who had no chance of entering the upper Chamber, took good care not to create for the grand lords a peerage in the English fashion.

The arguments of those who had the Anglomania, which were then presented with ability by Lally, Mounier, &c., and subsequently obstinately reproduced by Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and so many others, had been annihilated beforehand by Sieyès, in a chapter of his book on the *Third Estate* (*Tiers État*). This is truly admirable. That accomplished logician, by the sole power of his mind, not having seen England, and but little acquainted with her history, had already found those results which we obtain from a minute study of her past and present history!\* He saw perfectly well that that famous balance of the three powers, which, if real, would prevent any progress whatsoever, is a pure comedy, a mystification, for the profit of one of the powers (aristocratic in England, monarchical in France). England has ever been, is, and will be an aristocracy. The art of that aristocracy, what has perpetuated its power, is not its giving a share to the people, but in finding an exterior field for their activity, to open issues for them;† it is thus it has spread England all over the globe.

\* Her past, in my "History of France," wherein I meet with her every moment; her present, in the fine work of Léon Faucher. That book has given the English school a blow from which it will never recover. (See especially towards the end of the second volume). The English themselves (Bentham, Bulwer, Senior, &c.) agree to-day that their famous balance of the three powers is only a theme for schoolboys.

† England would have died, had she not found, from century to century,

As for the *veto*, Necker's opinion which he addressed to the Assembly, that moreover on which it had decided of its own accord, was to grant the *veto* to the King,—the suspensive *veto* ; the right of adjourning as far as the second legislature which should follow the one proposing the law.

That Assembly was ripe for dissolution. Created before the great Revolution which had just taken place, it was profoundly heterogeneous and confused, like the chaos of the *ancien régime*, whence it sprang. In spite of the name of National Assembly, with which it had been baptized by Sieyès, ✓ it remained feudal, and was nothing else but the ancient States-General. Ages had passed over it, from the 5th of May to the 31st of August. Elected in the antique form, and according to barbarous law, it represented some two or three hundred thousand nobles or priests just as much as the nation. By uniting them to itself, the Third Estate had grown weak and feeble. At every instant, even without being even aware of it, it was compromising with them. It adopted scarcely any measures but such as were prejudicial, illegitimate, powerless, and dangerous. The privileged classes, who were manœuvring outside with the court to undo the Revolution, obstructed it still more certainly in the very bosom of the Assembly.

That Assembly, full as it was of talent and science, was nevertheless monstrous, through the irremediable disaccordance of its elements. What production, or what generation can be expected from a monster ?

Such was the language of common sense and reason. The moderate who ought, one would think, to have been more keen-sighted and less dazzled, had no perception of anything. Strange enough, passion took a better view ; it perceived that everything was danger and obstacle in this twofold situation, and strove to get clear of it. But as passion and violence it inspired infinite distrust, and met with immense difficulties ; it became still more violent in order to surmount them, and that very energy created new obstacles.

an exterior diversion for her interior evil (aristocratic injustice): in the sixteenth and seventeenth, North America and the spoliation of Spain; in the eighteenth, the spoliation of France and the conquest of India; in the nineteenth, a new colonial extension, and an immense manufacturing development.

The monster of the time, I mean the discord of the two principles, their impotency for creating anything vital, must, to be well perceived, be seen in one man. That unity of person, that lofty combination of faculties which is called genius, is of no use, if, in that man—that genius—ideas are warring together, if principles and doctrines carry on a furious struggle in his bosom.

I know not a more melancholy spectacle for human nature than that now presented by Mirabeau. At Versailles he speaks for the absolute *veto*, but in such obscure terms that nobody distinctly understands whether he be for or against it. At Paris his friends maintain, on the same day, at the Palais Royal, that he has opposed the *veto*. He inspired so much personal attachment in the young men about him, that they did not hesitate to lie boldly in order to save him. "I loved him like a mistress," said Camille Desmoulins. It is well known that one of Mirabeau's secretaries tried to commit suicide at his death.

Those liars, exaggerating, as it often happens, falsehood to obtain the more credit, affirmed that on leaving the Assembly he had been waited for, followed, and wounded, having been stabbed with a sword! All the Palais Royal exclaimed that a guard of two hundred men must be voted to guard poor Mirabeau!

In that strange speech\* he had maintained the old sophism, that the royal sanction was a guarantee of liberty; that the King was a sort of tribune of the people; their representative—an irrevocable, irresponsible representative—one who is never to be called to account!

He was sincerely a royalist, and, as such, made no scruple to receive later a pension to keep open house for the deputies. He used to say to himself that after all he did but defend his own opinion. One thing, we must confess, corrupted him more than money, a thing which was the least to be suspected in that man so proud in his deportment and his language. What was it? Fear!

\* He had received it from a dreamer named Cazeaux. He had not even read it. On reading it at the tribune, he found it so bad that he was bathed in a cold perspiration, and skipped half of it.—Etienne Dumont's *Souvenirs*, p. 155.



Fear of the rising, growing Revolution. He beheld that young giant then prevailing over him, and which subsequently carried him off like another man. And then he cast himself back upon what was called the old order—true anarchy and a real chaos. From that fruitless struggle he was saved by death.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRESS.

Agitation of Paris for the Question of the *Veto*, August 30th.—State of the Press—Increase of Newspapers.—Tendencies of the Press.—It is still Royalist.—Loustalot, the Editor of the *Révolutions des Paris*.—His Proposition on the 31st of August; Rejected at the Hôtel-de-Ville.—Conspiracy of the Court, known to Lafayette and everybody.—Growing Opposition between the National Guards and the People—Uncertain Conduct of the Assembly.—Volney proposes its Dissolution, September 18th.—Impotency of Necker, the Assembly, the Court, and the Duke of Orleans.—Even the Press powerless.

WE have just seen two things: the situation of affairs was intolerable, and the Assembly incapable of remedying it.

Would a popular movement settle the difficulty? That could take place only on condition that it was truly a spontaneous, vast, unanimous movement of the people, like that of the 14th of July.

The fermentation was great, the agitation lively, but as yet partial. From the very first day that the question of the *veto* was put (Sunday, August 30), all Paris took alarm, for the absolute *veto* appeared as the annihilation of the sovereignty of the people. However, the Palais Royal alone stood forward. There it was decided that they should go to Versailles, to warn the Assembly that they perceived in its bosom a league for the *veto*, that they knew the members, and that, unless they renounced, Paris would march against them. A few hundred men accordingly set forth at ten in the evening; a pertinacious violent man, the Marquis de Saint-Huruge, a favourite with the crowd on account of his herculean strength and stentorian voice, had placed himself at their head. Having been imprisoned under the old government at the prayer of his wife



(a pretty coquette who possessed some credit), Saint-Huruge as may be conceived, was already a furious enemy of the *ancien régime*, and an ardent champion of the Revolution. On reaching the Champs-Élysées, his band, already greatly diminished, met with some national guards sent by Lafayette, who prevented their further progress.

The Palais Royal dispatched, one after the other, three or four deputations to the city, to obtain leave to pass. They wanted to make the riot legal, and with the consent of the authority. It is superfluous to say that the latter did not consent.

Meanwhile another attempt, far more serious, was preparing in the Palais Royal. The latter, whatever might be its success, would necessarily have at least the general advantage of introducing the grand question of the day into discussion among the whole people. There was, then, no longer any possibility of its being suddenly decided, or carried by surprise, at Versailles; Paris was observing and watching the Assembly, both by the press and by its own assembly—the great Parisian assembly, united, though divided into its sixty districts.

The author of the proposition was a young journalist. Before relating it, we ought to give an idea of the movement operating among the Press.

This sudden awaking of a people, called all at once to a knowledge of their rights and to decide on their destiny, had absorbed all the activity of the time in journalism. The most speculative minds had been hurried to the field of the practical. Every science, every branch of literature, stood still; political life was everything.

Every great day in '89 was accompanied with an eruption of newspapers:—

1st. In May and June, at the opening of the States-General, a multitude of them spring forth. Mirabeau patronised the *Courrier de Provence*; Gorsas, the *Courrier de Versailles*; Brissot, the *Patriote Français*; Barrière, the *Point du Jour*, &c. &c.

2ndly. On the night before the 14th of July, appeared the most popular of all the newspapers, *Les Révolutions de Paris*, edited by Loustalot.

3rdly. On the eve of the 5th and 6th of October appeared the *Ami du Peuple* (Marat) and the *Annales Patriotiques* (Carra and Mercier). Soon after, the *Courrier de Brabant*, by Camille Desmoulins, certainly the most witty of all; next, one of the most violent, the *Orateur du Peuple*, by Fréron.

The general character of that great movement, and which renders it the more admirable, is, that, in spite of shades of opinion, there is almost unanimity. Except one conspicuous newspaper, the Press presents the appearance of one vast council, in which everybody speaks in his turn, and all being engaged in a common aim, avoid every kind of hostility.

The Press, at that early age, struggling against the central power, has generally a tendency to strengthen the local powers, and to exaggerate the rights of the *commune* against the State. If the language of after-times might be here employed, we should say, that at that period they all seem *fédéralists*. Mirabeau is as much so as Brissot or Lafayette. This goes so far as to admit the independence of the provinces, if liberty become impossible for all France. Mirabeau would be contented to be Count of Provence; he says so in plain terms.

Notwithstanding all this, the Press, struggling against the King, is generally royalist. "At that time," says Camille Desmoulins at a later period, "there were not ten of us republicans in France." We must not allow ourselves to mistake the meaning of certain bold expressions. In '88, the violent d'Eprémesnil had said: "We must *unbourbonise* France." But it was only to make the Parliament king.

Mirabeau, who was destined to complete the sum of contradictions, caused Milton's violent little book against kings to be translated and printed in his name in '89, at the very moment when he was undertaking the defence of royalty. It was suppressed by his friends.

Two men were preaching the Republic: one of the most prolific writers of the period, the indefatigable Brissot, and the brilliant, eloquent, and bold Desmoulins. His book *La France libre* contains a violently satirical brief history of the monarchy. Therein he shows that principle of order and stability to have been, in practice, a perpetual disorder. Hereditary royalty, in order to redeem itself from so many inconveniences which are evidently inherent, has one general reply to everything: peace,

the maintenance of peace ; which does not prevent it from having, by minorities and quarrels of succession, kept France in an almost perpetual state of war :—wars with the English, wars with Italy, wars about the succession in Spain, &c.\*

Robespierre has said that the Republic has crept in between the parties, without anybody having suspected it. It is more exact to say that royalty itself introduced it, and urged it upon the minds of men. If men refuse to govern themselves, it is because royalty offers itself as a simplification which facilitates, removes impediments, and dispenses with virtue and efforts. But how, if it become itself the obstacle ? It may be boldly affirmed, that royalty taught the Republic, that it hurried France into it, when she distrusted it, and was far from it, even in thought.

To return, the first of the journalists of that day was neither Mirabeau, Camille Desmoulins, Brissot, Condorcet, Mercier, Carra, Gorsas, Marat, nor Barrère. They all published newspapers, and some to a great extent. Mirabeau used to print ten thousand copies of his famous *Courrier de Provence*. But of the *Révolutions de Paris* there were (of some numbers) as many as *two hundred thousand* copies printed. This was the greatest publicity ever obtained. The editor's name did not appear. The printer signed :—Prudhomme. That name has become one of the best known in the world. The unknown editor was Loustalot.

Loustalot, who died in 1792 at the age of twenty-nine, was a serious, honest, laborious young man. A writer of mediocrity, but grave, of an impassioned seriousness ; his real originality was his contrast with the frivolity of the journalists of the time. In his very violence we perceive an effort to be just. He was the writer preferred by the people. Nor was he unworthy of the preference. He gave, in the outbreak of the Revolution, more than one proof of courageous moderation. When the French guards were delivered by the people, he said there was but one solution for the affair ; that the prisoners should betake themselves to prison again, and that the electors and the National

\* Sismondi has shown, by an exact calculation on a period of 500 years, how much longer and more frequent wars have been in hereditary than in elective monarchies : this is the natural effect of minorities, quarrels of successor. &c. Sismondi, *Etudes sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres*, i., 214—221.

Assembly should petition the king to pardon them. When a mistake of the crowd had placed good Lasalle, the brave commandant of the city, in peril, Loustalot undertook his defence, justified him, and restored him to favour. In the affair of the servants who wanted the Savoyards to be driven away, he showed himself firm and severe as well as judicious. A true journalist, he was the man of the day, and not of the morrow. When Camille Desmoulins published his book, *La France libre*, wherein he suppresses the king, Loustalot, whilst praising him, finds him extravagant, and calls him a man of feverish imagination. Marat, then little known, had violently attacked Bailly in the *Ami du Peuple*, both as a public character and as a man. Loustalot defended him. He considered journalism as a public function, a sort of magistracy. No tendency to abstractions. He lives wholly and entirely in the crowd, and feels their wants and sufferings; he applies himself especially to the consideration of provisions, and to the grand question of the day,—bread. He proposes machines for grinding corn more expeditiously. He visits the unfortunate beings employed at work at Montmartre. And those miserable objects, whose extreme wretchedness had almost divested them of the human form,—that deplorable army of phantoms or skeletons, who inspire rather fear than pity,—wound Loustalot to the heart, and he addresses them in words of affection and tenderest compassion.

Paris could not remain in that position. It was necessary either to restore absolute royalty or found liberty.

On Monday morning, August 31st, Loustalot, finding the minds of the multitude more calm than on the Sunday evening, harangued in the Palais Royal. He said the remedy was not to go to Versailles, and made a less violent yet a bolder proposition. It was to go to the city, obtain the convocation of the districts, and in those assemblies to put these questions:—1st. Does Paris believe that the king has the right of preventing? 2ndly. Does Paris confirm or revoke its deputies? 3dly. If deputies be named, will they have a special mandate to refuse the *veto*? 4thly. If the former deputies be confirmed, cannot the Assembly be induced to adjourn the discussion?

The measure proposed, though eminently revolutionary and illegal (unconstitutional if there had been a constitution), never-

theless was so perfectly adapted to the necessities of the day, that it was, a few days later, reproduced, at least the principal part of it, in the Assembly itself, by one of its most eminent members.

Loustalot and the deputation of the Palais Royal were very badly received, their proposition rejected at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and the next morning accused in the Assembly. A threatening letter, received by the president and signed Saint-Hururge (who, however, maintained it was a forgery), completed the general irritation. They caused Saint-Hururge to be arrested, and the National Guard took advantage of a momentary tumult to shut up the Café de Foy. Meetings in the Palais Royal were forbidden and dispersed by the municipal authority.

The piquant part of the affair is that the executor of these measures, M. de Lafayette, was, at that time and always, a republican in heart. Throughout his life he dreamed of the republic and served royalty. A democratical royalty, or a royal democracy, appeared to him a necessary transition. To undeceive him it required no less than two experiments.

The court trifled with Necker and the Assembly. It did not deceive Lafayette; and yet he served it, and kept Paris in check. The horror of the former acts of violence of the people, and the bloodshed, made him recoil before the idea of another 14th of July. But would the civil war which the court was preparing have cost less blood? A serious and delicate question for the friend of humanity.

He was acquainted with everything. On the 13th of September, whilst receiving old Admiral d'Estaing, the commander of the National Guards of Versailles, to dinner at his house, he told him news of Versailles of which he was ignorant. That honest man, who thought he was very deep in the confidence of the king and the queen, now learned that they had returned to the fatal project of taking the king to Metz, that is to say, of beginning a civil war; that Breteuil was preparing everything in concert with the ambassador of Austria; that they were bringing towards Versailles the musketeers, the *gendarmes*, nine thousand of the king's household, two thirds of whom were noblemen; that they were to seize on Montargis, where they would be joined by the Baron de Vioménil, a man of action. The latter, who had served in almost all the wars



of the century, recently in that of America, had cast himself violently into the counter-revolution party, perhaps out of jealousy for Lafayette, who seemed to be playing the first part in the Revolution. Eighteen regiments, and especially the *Carabiniers*, had not taken the oath. That was enough to block up all the roads to Paris, cut off its supplies, and famish it. They were no longer in want of money; they had collected and enforced it from all sides; they made sure of having fifteen hundred thousand francs a month. The clergy would supply the remainder; a steward of the Benedictines was bound, for himself alone, in the sum of one hundred thousand crowns.\*

The old Admiral wrote to the queen on the Monday (14th): "I have always slept well the night before a naval battle, but since this terrible revelation, I have not been able to close my eyes." On hearing it at M. de Lafayette's table, he shuddered lest any one of the servants should hear it: "I remarked to him that one word from his mouth might become the signal of death." To which Lafayette, with his American coolness, replied: "That it would be advantageous for *one* to die for the salvation of all." The only head in peril would have been the queen's.

The Spanish ambassador said as much to d'Estaing; he knew it all from a considerable personage to whom they had proposed for his signature a list of association which the court caused to be circulated.

Thus, this profound secret, this mystery, was spread through the saloons on the 13th, and about the streets from the 14th to the 16th. On the 16th, the grenadiers of the French Guards, now become a paid national guard, declared they would go to Versailles to resume their old duties, to guard the Château and the king. On the 22nd, the grand plot was printed in the *Révolutions de Paris*, and read by all France.

M. de Lafayette, who believed himself *strong, too strong*, according to his own expressions, wished on one hand to check the Court by making them afraid of Paris, and on the other hand, to check Paris, and repress agitation by his National Guards. He used and abused their zeal, in quieting the rabble,

\* Three hundred thousand francs, or 12,000*l.* sterling.—C. C.



imposing silence on the Palais Royal, and preventing mobs ; he carried on a petty police warfare of annoyance against a crowd excited by the fears which he himself shared ; he knew of the plot, and yet he dispersed and arrested those who spoke of it. He managed so well that he created the most fatal animosity between the National Guards and the people. The latter began to remark that the chiefs, the commanders, were nobles, rich men, people of consequence. The National Guards in general, reduced in number, proud of their uniform and their arms, new to them, appeared to the people a sort of aristocracy. Being citizens and merchants, they were great sufferers by the riots, receiving nothing from their country estates, and gaining nothing ; they were every day called out, fatigued, and jaded ; every day, they wanted to bring matters to an end, and they testified their impatience by some act of brutality which set the crowd against them. Once, they drew their swords against a mob of peruke-makers, and there was bloodshed ; on another occasion, they arrested some persons who had indulged in jokes about the National Guard. A girl, having said she did not care for them, was taken and whipped.

The people were exasperated to such a degree, that they brought against the National Guard the strangest accusation—that of favouring the Court, and being in the plot of Versailles.

Lafayette was no hypocrite, but his position was equivocal. He prevented the grenadiers from going to Versailles to resume their duties as the king's guards, and gave warning to the minister, Saint-Priest (September 17th). His letter was turned to advantage. They showed it to the municipality of Versailles, making them take an oath of secrecy, and inducing them to ask that the regiment of Flanders should be sent for. They solicited the same step from a part of the National Guards of Versailles, but the majority refused.

That regiment, strongly suspected, because it had hitherto refused to take the new oath, arrived with its cannon, ammunition, and baggage, and entered Versailles with much noise. At the same time, the Château detained the body guards, who had concluded their service, in order to have double the number. A crowd of officers of every grade were daily arriving *en poste*, as the old nobility used to do on the eve of a battle, fearing to arrive too late.

Paris was uneasy. The French Guards were indignant ; they had been tried and tampered with without any other result than to put them on their guard. Bailly could not help speaking at the Hôtel-de-Ville. A deputation was sent, headed by the good old Dussaulx, to convey to the king the alarms of Paris.

The conduct of the Assembly in the meantime was strange. Now it seemed to be asleep, and then it would suddenly start up ; one day violent, on the next moderate and timid.

One morning, the 12th of September, it remembers the 4th of August, and the grand social revolution it had voted. It was five weeks since the decrees had been given ; all France spoke of them with joy ; but the Assembly said not one word about them. On the 12th, whilst a decree was being proposed in which the judicial committee demanded *that the laws should be put in force conformably to a decision of the 4th of August*, a deputy of Franche-Comté broke the ice and said : “ *Steps are being taken to prevent the promulgation of those decrees of the 4th of August ; it is said they are not to appear. It is time they should be seen, furnished with the royal seal. The people are waiting.*” Those words were quickly taken up. The Assembly was roused. Malouet, the orator of the moderate party—of the constitutional royalists,—even he (singularly enough) supported the proposition, and others with them. In spite of the Abbé Maury, it was decided that the decrees of the 4th of August should be presented for the king’s sanction.

This sudden movement, this aggressive disposition of even the moderates, inclines one to suppose that the most influential members were not ignorant of what Lafayette, the Spanish ambassador, and many others, were saying at Paris.

The Assembly seemed on the morrow astonished at its vigour. Many thought that the Court would never let the king sanction the decrees of the 4th of August, and foresaw that his refusal would provoke a terrible movement—a second fit of the Revolution. Mirabeau, Chapelier, and others, maintained that these decrees, not being properly laws, but principles of constitution, had no need of the royal sanction ; that the promulgation was sufficient. A bold, yet timid opinion : bold, in doing without the king ; timid, in dispensing with

his examining, sanctioning, or refusing : no refusal, no collision. Things would have been decided *ipso facto*, according as either party was predominant in this or that province. Here, they would have applied the decisions of the 4th of August, as decreed by the Assembly ; there, they would have eluded them, as not sanctioned by the king.

On the 15th, the royal inviolability, hereditary right, was voted by acclamation, as if to dispose the king in their favour. They nevertheless received from him a dilatory, equivocal reply relative to the 4th of August. He sanctioned nothing, but discussed, blaming this, commending that, and admitting scarcely any article without some modification. The whole bore the impress of Necker's usual style, his tergiversation, blunders, and half measures. The Court, that was preparing something very different, apparently expected to captivate public attention by this empty answer. The Assembly was in great agitation. Chapelier, Mirabeau, Robespierre, Petion, and others usually less energetic, affirmed that in demanding the sanction for these preliminary articles, the Assembly expected only a pure and simple promulgation. Then, a great discussion, and an unexpected, but very sensible motion from Volney : " This Assembly is too mixed in interests and passions. Let us determine the new conditions of election, and retire." Applause, but nothing more. Mirabeau objects that the Assembly has sworn not to separate before having formed the constitution.

On the 21st, the king being pressed to promulgate, laid aside all circumlocution ; the Court apparently believed itself stronger. He replied that *promulgation* belonged only to laws *invested with forms which procure their execution* (he meant to say *sanctioned*) ; that he was going to order the *publication*, and that he did not doubt but the laws which the Assembly would decree, would be such as he could *sanction*.

On the 24th, Necker came to make his confession to the Assembly. The first loan, thirty millions, had given but *two*. The second, eighty, had given but *ten*. The *general of finance*, as Necker's friends called him in their pamphlets, had been able to do nothing ; the credit which he expected to control and restore had perished in spite of him. He came to appeal to the devotion of the nation. The only remedy was

that she should enforce it herself, that everybody should tax himself at a fourth of his income.\*

Necker had now ended his part. After having tried every reasonable means, he trusted himself to the faith, the miracle, the vague hope that a people unable to pay less was about to pay more, and that they would tax themselves with the monstrous impost of a quarter of their revenue. The chimerical financier brought forward as the last word of his balance-sheet, as cash, a Utopia which the good Abbé of Saint-Pierre would not have proposed.

The impotent willingly believes in the impossible ; being incapacitated from acting himself, he imagines that chance, or some unknown and unforeseen accident, will act for him. The Assembly, no less impotent than the minister, shared his credulity. A wonderful speech from Mirabeau overcame all their doubts, and transported them out of their senses. He showed them bankruptcy, a hideous bankruptcy opening its monstrous abyss beneath them, and ready to devour both themselves and France. They voted. If the measure had been serious, it money had come in, the effect would have been singular : Necker would have succeeded in relieving those who were to drive Necker away, and the Assembly would have paid a war in order to dissolve the Assembly. Impossibility, contradiction, a perfect stand-still in every direction, was fundamentally the state of things for every man and every party. To sum up all in one word : nothing comes of nothing (*nul ne peut.*)

*The Assembly can do nothing.* Discordant in elements and principles, it was naturally incapable ; but it becomes still more so in presence of tumult, at the entirely novel noise of the press which drowns its voice. It would willingly cling to the royal power which it has demolished ; but its ruins are hostile : they would like to crush the Assembly. Thus Paris makes them afraid, and so does the Château. After the king's refusal, they dare no longer show their anger for fear of adding to the indignation of Paris. Except the responsibility of the ministers which they decree, they do nothing at all consonant with the situation of affairs ; the dividing of France into depart-

\* Necker, ever generous, for his own part exceeded the quarter ; he taxed himself at one hundred thousand francs (£4000.)

ments, and the criminal law, are discussed in empty space ; the hall is thinly attended ; scarcely do six hundred members assemble, and it is to give the presidency to Mounier, a personification of immobility ; to him who expresses the best all the difficulties of acting, and the general paralysis.

*Can the Court do anything ?* They think so at that moment. They see the nobility and clergy rallying around them. They perceive the Duke of Orleans unsupported in the Assembly ;\* they behold him, at Paris, spending much money, and gaining but little ground ; his popularity is surpassed by Lafayette.

All were ignorant of the situation, all overlooked the general force of things, and attributed events to some person or other, ridiculously exaggerating individual power. According to its hatred or its love, passion believes miracles, monsters, heroes. The Court accuse Orleans or Lafayette of everything. Lafayette himself, though naturally firm and cool-headed, becomes imaginative ; he is not far from believing likewise that all the disturbances are the work of the Palais Royal. A visionary appears on the press, the credulous, blind, furious Marat, who will vent accusations dictated at random by his dreams, designating one to-day, and to-morrow another to death ; he begins by affirming that the whole famine is the work of one man ; that Necker buys up corn on every side, in order that Paris may have none.

Marat is only beginning, however ; as yet he has but little influence. He stands conspicuously apart from all the press. The press accuses, but vaguely ; it complains, and is angry, like the people, without too well knowing what ought to be done. It sees plainly in general that there will be "a second fit of the Revolution." But how ? For what precise object ? It cannot exactly say. For the prescription of remedies, the press,—that young power, suddenly grown so great through the impotency of the others,—the press itself is powerless.

It does but little during the interval previous to the 5th of October ; the Assembly does little, and the Hôtel-de-Ville little. And yet everybody plainly perceives that some grand deed is about to be achieved. Mirabeau, on receiving one day his

\* In regulating the succession, the Assembly spared its rival the King of Spain, declaring it brought no prejudice to the renunciations of the Bourbons of Spain to the crown of France.



bookseller of Versailles, sends away his three secretaries, shuts the door, and says to him : " My dear Blaisot, you will see here soon some great calamity—bloodshed. From friendship, I wished to give you warning. But be not afraid ; there is no danger for honest men like you."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PEOPLE GO TO FETCH THE KING, OCTOBER 5, 1789.

The People alone find a Remedy : they go to fetch the King.—Egotistical Position of the Kings at Versailles.—Louis XVI. was unable to act in any way.—The Queen is solicited to act.—Orgy of the Body Guards, October 1st.—Insults offered to the National Cockade.—Irritation of Paris.—Misery and Sufferings of the Women.—Their courageous Compassion.—They invade the Hôtel-de-Ville, October 5th.—They march against Versailles.—The Assembly receives Warning.—Maillard and the Women before the Assembly.—Robespierre supports Maillard.—The Women before the King.—Indecision of the Court.

On the 5th of October, eight or ten thousand women went to Versailles, followed by crowds of people. The National Guard forced M. de Lafayette to lead them there the same evening. On the 6th, they brought back the king, and obliged him to inhabit Paris.

This grand movement is the most general, after the 14th of July, that occurs in the Revolution. The one of October was unanimous, almost as much so as the other ; at least in this sense, that they who took no part in it wished for its success, and all rejoiced that the king should be at Paris.

Here we must not seek the action of parties. They acted, but did very little.

The real, the certain cause, for the women and the most miserable part of the crowd, was nothing but hunger. Having dismounted a horseman at Versailles, they killed and ate his horse almost raw.

For the majority of the men, both the people and the National Guards, the cause of the movement was honour, the outrage of the Court against the Parisian cockade, adopted by all France as a symbol of the Revolution.

Whether the men, however, would have marched against



Versailles, if the women had not preceded them, is doubtful. Nobody before them had the idea of going to fetch the king. The Palais Royal, on the 30th of August, departed with Saint-Huruge, but it was to convey complaints and threats to the Assembly then discussing the *veto*. But here, the people alone are the first to propose ; alone, they depart to take the king, as alone they took the Bastille. What is most *people* in the people, I mean most instinctive and inspired, is assuredly the women. Their idea was this : " Bread is wanting, let us go and fetch the king ; they will take care, if he be with us, that bread be wanting no longer. Let us go and fetch *the baker!*"

A word of simple yet profound meaning ! The king ought to live with the people, see their sufferings, suffer with them, and be of the same household with them. The ceremonies of marriage and those of the coronation used to coincide in several particulars ; the king espoused the people. If royalty is not tyranny, there must be marriage and community, and the couple must live, according to the low but energetic motto of the middle ages, " With one loaf and one pot."\*

Was not the egotistical solitude in which the kings were kept, with an artificial crowd of gilded beggars in order to make them forget the people, something strange and unnatural, and calculated to harden their hearts ? How can we be surprised if those kings became estranged, hard-hearted, and barbarous ? How could they, without their isolated retreat at Versailles, ever have attained that degree of insensibility ? The very sight of it is immoral : a world made expressly for one man ! There only could a man forget the condition of humanity, and sign, like Louis XIV., the expulsion of a million of men ; or, like Louis XV., speculate on famine.

The unanimity of Paris had overthrown the Bastille. To conquer the king and the Assembly, it was necessary that it should find itself once more unanimous. The National Guard and the people were beginning to divide. In order to re-unite them, and make them concur for the same end, it required no less than a provocation from the Court. No political wisdom would have brought about the event ; an act of folly was necessary.

\* See my *Origines du Droit : symboles et formules juridiques*

That was the real remedy, the only means of getting rid of the intolerable position in which everybody seemed entangled. This folly would have been done by the queen's party long before, if it had not met with its chief stumbling-block and difficulty in Louis XVI. Nobody could be more averse to a change of habits. To deprive him of his hunting, his workshop, and his early hour of retiring to rest ; to interrupt the regularity of his meals and prayers ; to put him on horseback *en campagne*, and make an active partisan of him, as we see Charles I., in the picture by Vandyck, was not easy. His own good sense likewise told him that he ran much risk in declaring himself against the National Assembly.

On the other hand, this same attachment to his habits, to the ideas of his education and childhood, made him against the Revolution even more than the diminution of the royal authority. He did not conceal his displeasure at the demolition of the Bastille.\* The uniform of the National Guards worn by his own people ; his valets now become lieutenants—officers ; more than one musician of the chapel chanting mass in a captain's uniform ; all that annoyed his sight : he caused his servants to be forbidden “ to appear in his presence in such an unseasonable costume.”†

It was difficult to move the king, either one way or the other. In every deliberation, he was very fluctuating, but in his old habits, and in his rooted ideas, insuperably obstinate. Even the queen, whom he dearly loved, would have gained nothing by persuasion. Fear had still less influence upon him ; he knew he was the anointed of the Lord, inviolable and sacred ; what could he fear ?

Meanwhile, the queen was surrounded by a whirlwind of passions, intrigues, and interested zeal ; prelates and lords, all that aristocracy who had so aspersed her character, and now were trying to effect a reconciliation, crowded her apartments, fervently conjuring her to save the monarchy. She alone, if they were to be believed, possessed genius and courage ; it was time that she, the daughter of Maria-Theresa, should show herself. The queen derived courage, moreover, from two very different sorts of people ; on one hand, brave and worthy chevaliers of

\* Alexandre de Lameth.

† Campan, ii.

Saint-Louis, officers or provincial noblemen, who offered her their swords; on the other, projectors and schemers, who showed plans, undertook to execute them, and warranted success. Versailles was as if besieged by these Figaros of royalty.

It was necessary to make a holy league, and for all honest people to rally round the queen. The king would then be carried away in the enthusiasm of their love, and unable to resist any longer. The revolutionary party could make but one campaign; once conquered, it would perish: on the contrary, the other party, comprising all the large proprietors, was able to suffice for several campaigns, and maintain the war for many years. For such arguments to be good, it was only necessary to suppose that the unanimity of the people would not affect the soldier, and that he would never remember that he also was the people.

The spirit of jealousy then rising between the National Guard and the people doubtless emboldened the Court, and made them believe Paris to be powerless; they risked a premature manifestation which was destined to ruin them. Fresh body guards were arriving, for their three months' service: these men, unacquainted with Paris or the Assembly, strangers to the new spirit, good provincial royalists, imbued with all their family prejudices, and paternal and maternal recommendations to serve the king, and the king alone. That body of guards, though some of its members were friends of liberty, had not taken the oath, and still wore the white cockade. By them, they attempted to entice away the officers of the regiment of Flanders, and those of a few other troops. In order to bring them all together, a grand dinner was given, to which were admitted a few officers selected from the National Guard of Versailles, whom they hoped to attach to their cause.

We must know that the town in France which had the deepest detestation for the Court, was the one that saw most of it, namely, Versailles. Whoever was not a servant or an *employé* belonging to the Château was a revolutionist. The constant sight of all that pomp, of those splendid equipages, and those haughty, supercilious people, engendered envy and hatred. This disposition of the inhabitants had caused them to name one Lecointre, a linendraper, a firm patriot, but other-

wise a spiteful, virulent man, as lieutenant-colonel of their National Guard. The invitation sent to a few of the officers was but little flattering to them, and a cause of great dissatisfaction to the others.

A military repast might have been given in the Orangerie or anywhere else ; but the king (an unprecedented favour) granted the use of his magnificent theatre, in which no *fête* had been given since the visit of the emperor Joseph II. Wines are lavished with royal prodigality. They drink the health of the king, the queen, and the dauphin ; somebody, in a low, timid voice, proposed that of the nation ; but nobody would pay any attention. At the dessert, the grenadiers of the regiment of Flanders, the Swiss, and other soldiers are introduced. They all drink and admire, dazzled by the fantastical brilliancy of that singular fairy scene, where the boxes, lined with looking-glasses, reflect a blaze of light in every direction.

The doors open. Behold the king and the queen ! The king has been prevailed on to visit them on his return from the chase. The queen walks round to every table, looking beautiful, and adorned with the child she bears in her arms. All those young men are delighted, transported out of their senses. The queen, we must confess, less majestic at other periods, had never discouraged those who devoted their hearts to her service ; she had not disdained to wear in her head-dress a plume from Lauzun's helmet.\* There was even a tradition that the bold declaration of a private in the body guards had been listened to without anger ; and that, without any other punishment than a benevolent irony, the queen had obtained his promotion.

So beautiful, and yet so unfortunate ! As she was departing with the king, the band played the affecting air : " O Richard, O my king, abandoned by the whole world ! " Every heart melted at that appeal. Several tore off their cockades, and took that of the queen, the black Austrian cockade, devoting themselves to her service. At the very least, the tri-color cockade was turned inside out, so as to appear white. The

\* What does it signify whether Lauzun offered it, or she had asked for it? See *Mémoires de Campan*, and Lauzun (*Revue rétrospective*), &c.

music continued, ever more impassioned and ardent : it played the *Marche des Hulans*, and sounded the charge. They all leaped to their feet, looking about for the enemy. No enemy appeared ; for want of adversaries they scaled the boxes, rushed out, and reached the marble court. Perseval, aide-de-camp to d'Estaing, scales the grand balcony, and makes himself master of the interior posts, shouting, " They are our prisoners." He adorns himself with the white cockade. A grenadier of the regiment of Flanders likewise ascends, and Perseval tore off and gave him a decoration which he then wore. A dragoon wanted also to ascend, but being unsteady, he tumbled down, and would have killed himself in his despair.

To complete the scene, another, half drunk and half mad, goes shouting about that he is a spy of the Duke of Orleans, and inflicts a slight wound upon himself ; his companions were so disgusted that they kicked him almost to death.

The frenzy of that mad orgy seemed to infect the whole court. The queen, on presenting flags to the National Guards of Versailles, said " that she was still enchanted with it." On the 3rd of October, another dinner ; they grow more daring, their tongues are untied, and the counter-revolution showed itself boldly ; several of the National Guards withdrew in indignation. The costume of National Guard is no longer received in the palace. " You have no feeling," said one officer to another, " to wear such a dress." In the long gallery, and in the apartments, the ladies no longer allow the tricolor cockade to circulate. With their handkerchiefs and ribands they make white cockades, and tie them themselves. The damsels grow so bold as to receive the vows of these new chevaliers, and allow them to kiss their hands. " Take this cockade," said they, " and guard it well ; it is the true one, and alone shall be triumphant." How could they refuse, from such lovely hands, that symbol, that *souvenir* ? And yet it is civil war and death : to-morrow, La Vendée ! That fair and almost infantine form, standing by the aunts of the king, will be Madame de Lescure and De la Rochejaquelin.\*

The brave National Guards of Versailles had much ado to

\* She was then at Versailles. See the novel, true in this particular, which M. de Barante has published in her name.



defend themselves. One of their captains had been, willingly or unwillingly, decked out by the ladies with an enormous white cockade. His colonel, Lecointre, the linendraper, was furious. "Those cockades," said he, firmly, "shall be changed, and within a week, or all is lost." He was right. Who could mistake the omnipotence of the symbol? The three colours were the 14th of July and the victory of Paris, the Revolution itself. Thereupon a chevalier of Saint-Louis runs after Lecointre, declaring himself the champion of the white cockade against all comers. He follows, lies in wait for him, and insults him. This passionate defender of the *ancien régime* was not, however, a Montmorency, but simply the son-in-law of the queen's flower-girl.

Lecointre marches off to the Assembly, and requests the military committee to require the oath from the body guard. Some old guards there present declared that it could never be obtained. The committee did nothing, fearful of occasioning some collision and bloodshed; but it was precisely this prudence that occasioned it.

Paris felt keenly the insult offered to its cockade; it was said to have been ignominiously torn to pieces and trodden under foot. On the very day of the second dinner (Saturday evening, the 3rd) Danton was thundering at the club of the Cordeliers. On Sunday, there was a general onslaught on black or white cockades. Mobs of people and citizens, where coats and jackets appeared mingled together, took place in the *cafés*, before the doors of the *cafés*, in the Palais Royal, at the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, at the ends of the bridges, and on the quays. Terrible rumours were in circulation about the approaching war; on the league of the queen and the princes with the German princes; on the foreign uniforms, red and green, then seen in Paris; on the supplies of flour from Corbeil, which came now only every other day; on the inevitably increasing scarcity, and on the approaching severe winter. There is no time to be lost, said they; if people want to prevent war and famine, the king must be brought here; otherwise the Court will carry him off.

Nobody felt all that more keenly than the women. The family, the household, had then become a scene of extreme suffering. A lady gave the alarm on the evening of Saturday,



the 3rd. Seeing her husband was not sufficiently listened to, she ran to the Café de Foy, there denounced the anti-national cockades, and exposed the public danger. On Monday a young girl took a drum into the markets, beat the *générale*, and marched off all the women in the quarter.

Such things are seen only in France ; our women are brave, and make others so. The country of Joan of Arc, Joan of Montfort, and Joan Hachette, can quote a hundred heroines. There was one at the Bastille, who afterwards departed for war, and was made captain in the artillery ; her husband was a soldier. On the 18th of July, when the king went to Paris, many of the women were armed. The women were in the van of our Revolution. We must not be surprised ; they suffered more.

Great miseries are ferocious ; they strike the weak rather than the strong ; they ill-treat children and women rather than men. The latter come and go, boldly hunt about, set their wits to work, and at length find at least sufficient for the day. Women, poor women, live, for the most part, shut up, sitting, knitting or sewing ; they are not fit, on the day when everything is wanting, to seek their living. It is cruel to think that woman, the dependent being, who can live only in company, is more often alone than man. He finds company everywhere, and forms new connexions. But she is nothing without family. And yet her family overwhelms her ; all the burden falls upon her. She remains in her cold, desolate, unfurnished lodging, with her children weeping, or sick and dying, who will weep no more. A thing little remarked, but which gives perhaps the greatest pang to the maternal heart, is, that the child is unjust. Accustomed to find in the mother a universal all-sufficient providence, he taxes her cruelly, unfeelingly, for whatever is wanting, is noisy and angry, adding to her grief a greater agony.

Such is the mother. Let us take into account also many lonely girls, sad creatures, without any family or support, who, too ugly, or virtuous, have neither friend nor lover, know none of the joys of life. Should their little work be no longer able to support them, they know not how to make up the deficiency, but return to their garret and wait ; sometimes they are found dead, chance revealing the fact to a neighbour.

These unfortunate beings possess not even enough energy to complain, to make known their situation, and protest against their fate. Such as act and agitate in times of great distress, are the strong, the least exhausted by misery, poor rather than indigent. Generally, the intrepid ones, who then make themselves conspicuous, are women of a noble heart, who suffer little for themselves, but much for others; pity, inert and passive in men, who are more resigned to the sufferings of others, is in women a very active, violent sentiment, which occasionally becomes heroic, and impels them imperatively towards the boldest achievements.

On the 5th of October, there was a multitude of unfortunate creatures who had eaten nothing for thirty hours.\* That painful sight affected everybody, yet nobody did anything for them; everybody contented themselves with deploring the hard necessity of the times. On Sunday evening (4th) a courageous woman, who could not behold this any longer, ran from the quarter Saint-Denis to the Palais Royal, forced her way through a noisy crowd of orators, and obtained a hearing. She was a woman of thirty-six years of age, well dressed and respectable, but powerful and intrepid. She wants them to go to Versailles, and she will march at their head. Some laugh at her; she boxes the ears of one of them for doing so. The next morning she departed among the foremost, sword in hand, took a cannon from the city, sat astride on it, and, with the match ready lit, rode off to Versailles.

Among the failing trades which seemed to be perishing with the *ancien régime* was that of carvers of wood. There used to be much work of that kind, both for the churches and apartments. Many women were sculptors. One of them, Madeleine Chabry, being quite out of work, had set up as a flower-girl (*bouquetière*) in the quarter of the Palais Royal, under the name of Louison; she was a girl of seventeen, handsome and witty. One may boldly venture to state that it was not hunger that drove her to Versailles. She followed the general impulse, and the dictates of her good courageous heart.

\* See the depositions of the witnesses, *Moniteur*, i., p. 568, col. 2. This is the principal source. Another, very important, abounding in details, and which everybody copies, without quoting it, is the *Histoire de deux Amis de la Liberté*, t. iii.

The women placed her at their head and made her their orator.

There were many others who were not driven by hunger: shopwomen, portresses, girls of the town, compassionate and charitable, as they so often are. There was also a considerable number of market-women; the latter were strict Royalists, but they wanted so much the more to have the king at Paris. They had already been to see him, on some occasion or other, some time before; they had spoken to him with much affection, with a laughable yet touching familiarity, which showed a perfect sense of the situation of affairs: "Poor man," said they, looking at the king, "poor dear man, good papa!" And to the queen more seriously: "Madam, madam, take compassion, —let us be free with each other. Let us conceal nothing, but say frankly what we have to say."

These market-women are not those who suffer much from misery: their trade consisting of the necessities of life is subject to less variation. But they see wretchedness more than anybody, and feel it; passing their lives in the public streets, they do not, like us, escape the scenes of suffering. Nobody is more compassionate or kinder towards the wretchedly poor. With their clownish forms and rude and violent language, they have often a noble heart overflowing with good nature. We have seen our women of Picardy, poor fruit-women of the market of Amiens, save the father of four children, who was going to be guillotined. It was at the time of the coronation of Charles X.; they left their business and their families, went off to Reims, made the king weep with compassion, obtained the pardon, and on their return, making an abundant subscription among themselves, sent away the father, with his wife and children, safe, and loaded with presents.

On the 5th of October, at seven in the morning, they heard the beating of a drum, and could no longer resist. A little girl had taken a drum from the guard-house, and was beating the *générale*. It was Monday; the markets were deserted, and all marched forth. "We will bring back," said they, "*the baker and the baker's wife*. And we shall have the pleasure of hearing our *little daring mother* Mirabeau."

The market people march forth, and the Faubourg Saint-

Antoine, on the other hand, was likewise marching. On the road, the women hurry along with them all they happen to meet, threatening such as are unwilling that they will cut their hair off. First they go to the Hôtel-de-Ville. There a baker had just been brought who used to give false weight of seven ounces in a two pound loaf. The lamp was lowered. Though the man was guilty on his own confession, the National Guard contrived to let him escape. They presented their bayonets to the four or five hundred women already assembled. On the other side, at the bottom of the square, stood the cavalry of the National Guard. The women were by no means daunted. They charged infantry and cavalry with a shower of stones; but the soldiers could not make up their minds to fire on them. The women then forced open the Hôtel-de-Ville, and entered all the offices. Many of them were well dressed: they had put on white gowns for that grand day. They inquired curiously into the use of every room, and entreated the representatives of the districts to give a kind reception to the women they had forced to accompany them, several of whom were *enceinte*, and ill, perhaps from fear. Others, ravenous and wild, shouted out *Bread and arms!*—that the men were cowards,—and they would show them what courage was.—That the people of the Hôtel-de-Ville were only fit to be hanged,—that they must burn their writings and waste paper. And they were going to do so, and to burn the building perhaps. A man stopped them, —a man of gigantic stature, dressed in black, and whose serious countenance seemed more sombre than his dress. At first they were going to kill him, thinking he belonged to the town, and calling him a traitor. He replied he was no traitor, but a bailiff by profession, and one of the conquerors of the Bastille. It was Stanislas Maillard.

Early that morning, he had done good service in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The volunteers of the Bastille under the command of Hullin, were drawn up on the square in arms. The workmen who were demolishing the fortress believed they were sent against them. Maillard interposed and prevented the collision. At the Hôtel-de-Ville, he was lucky enough to prevent its being burnt. The women even promised they would not allow any men to enter: they had left armed sentinels at the grand entrance. At eleven o'clock, the men attacked

the small door which opened under the arcade Saint-Jean. Armed with levers, hammers, hatchets, and pick-axes, they broke open the door, and forced the magazine of arms. Among them was a French guardsman, who had wanted in the morning to ring the tocsin, and had been caught in the act. He had, he said, escaped by miracle; the moderate party, as furious as the others, would have hung him had it not been for the women; he showed his bare neck, which they had relieved from the rope. By way of retaliation, they took a man of the Hôtel-de-Ville in order to hang him. It was the brave Abbé Lefebvre, who had distributed the gunpowder on the 14th of July. Some women, or men disguised as women, hung him accordingly to the little steeple; one of them cut the rope, and he fell, alive and only stunned, into a room twenty-five feet below.

Neither Bailly nor Lafayette had arrived. Maillard repaired to the aide-major-general and told him there was only one way of ending the business, which was that he, Maillard, should lead the women to Versailles. That journey will give time to collect the troops. He descends, beats the drum, and obtains a hearing. The austere tragical countenance of that tall man in black was very effective in La Grève; he appeared a prudent man, and likely to bring matters to a successful issue. The women, who were already departing with the cannon of the town, proclaimed him their captain. He put himself at their head with eight or ten drums; seven or eight thousand women followed, with a few hundred armed men, and a company of the volunteers of the Bastille brought up the rear.

On arriving at the Tuileries, Maillard wanted to follow the quay, but the women wished to pass triumphantly under the clock, through the palace and the garden. Maillard, an observer of ceremony, told them to remember that it was the king's house and garden; and that to pass through without permission was insulting the king.\* He politely approached the Swiss guard, and told him that those ladies merely wished to pass through, without doing any mischief. The Swiss drew his sword and rushed upon Maillard, who drew his. A portress gave a lucky stroke with a stick; the Swiss fell, and a man held his bayonet to his breast. Maillard stopped him, coolly

\* *Déposition de Maillard, Moniteur, i., p. 572.*



disarmed them both, and carried off the bayonet and the swords.

The morning was passing, and their hunger increased. At Chaillot, Auteuil, and Sèvres, it was very difficult to prevent the poor starving women from stealing food. Maillard would not allow it. At Sèvres the troop was exhausted; there, there was nothing to be had, not even for money; every door was closed except one, that of a sick man who had remained; Maillard contrived to buy of him a few pitchers of wine. Then, he choose out seven men, and charged them to bring before him the bakers of Sèvres, with whatever they might have. There were eight loaves in all, thirty-two pounds of bread for eight thousand persons. They shared them among them and crawled further. Fatigue induced most of the women to lay aside their arms. Maillard, moreover, made them understand that as they wished to pay a visit to the king and the Assembly, and to move and affect them, it was not proper to arrive in such a warlike fashion. The cannon were placed in the rear, and in a manner concealed. The sage bailiff wished it to be an *amener sans scandale*, as they say in courts of law. At the entrance of Versailles, in order to hint their pacific intention, he gave a signal to the women to sing the air of Henri IV.

The people of Versailles were delighted, and cried *Vivent nos Parisiennes!* Foreigners among the spectators saw nothing but what was innocent in that crowd coming to ask the king for succour. The Genevese Dumont, a man unfriendly to the Revolution, who was dining at the palace *Des Petites-Écuries*, looking out of window, says himself: "All that crowd only wanted bread."

The Assembly had been that day full of stormy discussions. The king, being unwilling to *sanction* either the declaration of rights, or the decrees of the 4th of August, replied that constitutional laws could be judged only in their *ensemble*; that he *acceded*, however, in consideration of the alarming circumstances, and on the express condition that the executive power would resume all its force.

"If you accept the king's letter," said Robespierre, there is no longer any constitution, nor any right to have one." Duport,



Grégoire, and other deputies speak in the same manner. Pétion mentions and blames the orgy of the body guards. A deputy, who had himself served among them, demands, for their honour, that the denunciation be stated in a regular form, and that the guilty parties be prosecuted. "I will denounce," cried Mirabeau, "and I will sign, if the Assembly declare that the person of the king is *alone* inviolable." This was designating the queen. The whole Assembly recoiled from the motion, which was withdrawn. On such a day, it would have provoked assassination.

Mirabeau himself was not free from uneasiness for his backsliding, and his speech on the *veto*. He approached the president, and said to him in an under tone: "Mounier, Paris is marching against us,—believe me or not, forty thousand men are marching against us. Feign illness, go to the palace, and give them this notice; there is not a moment to be lost." "Is Paris marching?" said Mounier, drily (he thought Mirabeau was one of the authors of the movement). "Well! so much the better! we shall have a republic the sooner."

The Assembly decide that they will send to the king to request the mere and simple acceptance of the Declaration of Rights. At three o'clock, Target announces that a crowd had appeared before the doors on the *Avenue de Paris*.

Everybody was acquainted with the event, except the king. He had departed for the chase that morning as usual, and was hunting in the woods of Meudon. They sent after him. Meanwhile, they beat the *générale*, the body guards mounted their horses on the *Place d'Armes*, and stood with their backs to the iron gates; the regiment of Flanders below, on their right, near the *Avenue de Sceaux*. M. d'Estaing, in the name of the municipality of Versailles, orders the troops to act in concert with the National Guard, and oppose the rioters. The municipality had carried their precaution so far as to authorize d'Estaing *to follow the king*, if he went far, on the singular condition of *bringing him back* to Versailles as soon as possible. D'Estaing adhered to the latter order, went up to the Château, and left the National Guard of Versailles to manage as it pleased. M. de Gouvernet, the second in command, likewise left his post, and placed himself among the body guards, pre-

ferring, he said, to be with people who know how to fight and *sabre*. Lecointre, the lieutenant-colonel, remained alone to command.

Meanwhile, Maillard arrived at the National Assembly. All the women wanted to enter. He had the greatest trouble to prevail on them to send in only fifteen of their number. They placed themselves at the bar, having at their head the French guardsman of whom we have spoken, a woman who carried a tambourine at the end of a pole, and the gigantic bailiff in the midst, in his tattered black coat, and sword in hand. The soldier began by pertly telling the Assembly that, on no bread being found at the baker's that morning, he had wanted to ring the tocsin; that he had near been hanged, and owed his safety to the ladies who accompanied him. "We come," said he, "to demand bread, and the punishment of the body guard who have insulted the cockade. We are good patriots; on our road we have torn down the black cockades, and I will have the pleasure of tearing one before the Assembly."

To which the other gravely added: "Everybody must certainly wear the patriotic cockade." This was received with a few murmurs.

"And yet we are all brethren!" cried the sinister apparition.

Maillard alluded to what the municipal council of Paris had declared the day before: that the tricolor cockade, having *been adopted as a symbol of fraternity*, was the only one that ought to be worn by citizens.

The women, being impatient, shouted together, "Bread! Bread!" Maillard then began to speak of the horrible situation of Paris, of the supplies being intercepted by the other towns, or by the aristocrats. "They want," said he, "to starve us. A miller has received from somebody two hundred francs to induce him not to grind, with a promise that he should receive as much every week." The Assembly exclaimed, "Name him." It was in the Assembly itself that Grégoire had spoken of that current report; and Maillard had heard of it on the road.

"Name him!" some of the women shouted at random: "It is the archbishop of Paris."

At that moment, when the lives of many men seemed hanging by a thread, Robespierre took a serious step. Alone, he

supported Maillard ; said that Abbé Grégoire had spoken of the fact, and would doubtless give some information.\*

Other members of the Assembly tried threats and caresses. A deputy of the clergy, an *abbé*, or a prelate, offered his hand to one of the women to kiss. She flew into a passion, and said, "I was not made to kiss a dog's paw." Another deputy, a military man, and wearing the cross of Saint-Louis, hearing Maillard say that the clergy were the grand obstacle to the constitution, exclaimed, in a passion, that he ought instantly to be punished as an example. Maillard, nothing daunted, replied that he inculpated no member of the Assembly ; that the Assembly were doubtless ignorant of all ; and that he thought he was doing them a service in giving them this information. For the second time, Robespierre supported Maillard, and calmed the anger of the women. Those outside were growing impatient, fearing for the safety of their orator. A report was spreading among them that he had perished. He went out for a moment, and showed himself.

Maillard, then resuming his speech, begged the Assembly to engage the National Guards to make atonement for the insult offered to the cockade. Some deputies gave him the lie. Maillard insisted in unceremonious language. Mounier, the president, reminded him of the respect due to the Assembly ; and added, foolishly, that they who wished to be citizens were perfectly at liberty to be so. This gave an advantage to Maillard ; he replied : "Everybody ought to be proud of the name of citizen ; and if, in that august assembly, there were anybody who considered it a dishonour, he ought to be excluded." The Assembly started with emotion, and applauded : "Yes," cried they, "we are all citizens!"

At that moment a tricolored cockade was brought in, sent by the body guard. The women shouted, "God save the king and the body guard !" Maillard, who was not so easily satisfied, insisted on the necessity of sending away the regiment of Flanders.

Mounier, then hoping to be able to get rid of them, said that the Assembly had neglected nothing to obtain provisions,

\* All this has been disfigured and curtailed by the *Moniteur*. Luckily, it gives later the depositions (at the end of the 1st volume). See also the *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, Ferrières, &c. &c.

neither had the king ; that they would try to find some new means, and that they might withdraw in peace. Maillard did not stir, saying, " No, that is not enough."

A deputy then proposed to go and inform the king of the miserable state of Paris. The Assembly voted it, and the women, eagerly seizing that hope, threw their arms round the necks of the deputies, and embraced the president in spite of his resistance.

" But where is our Mirabeau ? " said they, once more ; " we should like to see our Count de Mirabeau."

Mounier, surrounded, kissed, and almost stifled, then moodily set out with the deputation and a crowd of women, who insisted on following him. " We were on foot," says he, " in the mud, and it was raining in torrents. We had to pass through a ragged noisy multitude, armed in a fantastical manner. Body guards were patrolling and galloping about. Those guards on beholding Mounier and the deputies, with their strange *cortège* of honour, imagined they saw there the leaders of the insurrection, and wanting to disperse that multitude, galloped through them."\* The *invincible* deputies escaped as they could, and ran for their lives through the mud. It is easy to conceive the rage of the people, who had imagined that, with them, they were sure of being respected !

Two women were wounded, and even by swords, according to some witnesses.† However, the people did nothing. From three till eight in the evening, they were patient and motionless, only shouting and hooting whenever they beheld the odious uniform of the body guard. A child threw stones.

The king had been found ; he had returned from Meudon, without hurrying himself. Mounier, being at length recognised, was allowed to enter with twelve women. He spoke to the king of the misery of Paris, and to the ministers of the request of the Assembly, who were waiting for the pure and simple acceptance of the Declaration of Rights and other constitutional articles.

Meanwhile the king listened to the women with much kindness. The young girl, Louison Chabry, had been charged to

\* See Mounier, at the end of the *Exposé justificatif*.

† If the king forbade the troops to act, as people affirm, it was at a later period, and too late.

speak for the others ; but her emotion was so great in presence of the king, that she could only articulate " Bread ! " and fell down in a swoon. The king, much affected, ordered her to be taken care of ; and when, on departing, she wanted to kiss his hand, he embraced her like a father.

She ran out a Royalist, and shouting "*Vive le Roi !*" The women, who were waiting for her in the square, were furious, and began saying she had been bribed ; in vain did she turn her pockets inside out, to show that she had no money ; the women tied their garters round her neck to strangle her. She was torn from them, but not without much difficulty. She was obliged to return to the Château, and obtain from the king a written order to send for corn, and remove every obstacle for the provisioning of Paris.

To the demands of the president, the king had coolly replied : " Return about nine o'clock." Mounier had nevertheless remained at the castle, at the door of the council, insisting on having an answer, knocking every hour, till ten in the evening. But nothing was decided.

The minister of Paris, M. de Saint-Priest, had heard the news very late (which proves how indecisive and spontaneous the departure for Versailles had been). He proposed that the queen should depart for Rambouillet, and that the king should remain, resist, and fight if necessary ; the departure of the queen alone would have quieted the people and rendered fighting unnecessary. M. Necker wanted the king to go to Paris, and trust himself to the people ; that is to say, that he should be sincere and frank, and accept the Revolution. Louis XVI., without coming to any resolution, dismissed the council, in order to consult the queen.

She was very willing to depart, but with him, and not to leave such an indecisive man to himself ; the name of the king was her weapon for beginning the civil war. Saint-Priest heard, about seven o'clock, that Lafayette, urged by the National Guard, was marching against Versailles. " We must depart immediately," said he ; " the king at the head of the troops will pass without any difficulty." But it was impossible to bring him to any decision. He believed (but very wrongly) that, if he departed, the Assembly would make the Duke of Orleans king. He was also adverse to flight ; he strode to and fro,

repeating from time to time : " A king a fugitive ! a king a fugitive ! " \* The queen, however, having insisted on departing, the order was given for the earriages. It was too late.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE KING BROUGHT BACK TO PARIS.

The 5th of October continued.—First Blood shed.—The Women gain over the Regiment of Flanders.—Fight between the Body Guard and the National Guard of Versailles.—The King no longer able to escape.—Affright of the Court.—The Women pass the Night in the Hall of the Assembly.—Lafayette forced to march against Versailles.—6th of October.—The Château assailed.—Danger of the Queen.—The Body Guards saved by the French Ex-Guards.—Hesitation of the Assembly.—Conduct of the Duke of Orleans.—The King led to Paris.

ONE of the Paris militia, whom a crowd of women had taken, in spite of himself, for their leader, and who excited by the journey, had shown himself at Versailles more enthusiastic than all the others, ventured to pass behind the body guard there : seeing the iron gate shut, he began insulting the sentinel stationed within, and menacing him with his bayonet. A lieutenant of the guard and two others drew their swords, and galloped after him. The man ran for his life, tried to reach a shed, but tumbled over a tub, still shouting for assistance. The horseman had come up with him, just as the National Guard of Versailles could contain themselves no longer : one of them, a retail wine-merchant, stepped from the ranks, aimed, fired, and stopped him short ; he had broken the arm that held the uplifted sabre.

D'Estaing, the commander of this National Guard, was at the castle, still believing that he was to depart with the king. Lecointre, the lieutenant-colonel, remained on the spot demanding orders of the municipal council, who gave none. He was justly fearful lest that famished multitude should overrun the town and feed themselves. He went to them, inquired what quantity of provisions was necessary, and entreated the council

\* See Necker, and his daughter, Madame de Staël's *Considérations*.



to give them ; but could only obtain a little rice, which was nothing for such a multitude. Then he caused a search to be made in every direction, and, by his laudable diligence, gave some relief to the people.

At the same time, he addressed himself to the regiment of Flanders, and asked the officers and soldiers whether they would fire. The latter were already under a far more powerful influence. Women had cast themselves among them, entreating them not to hurt the people. A woman then appeared among them, whom we shall often see again, who seemed not to have walked in the mire with the others, but had, doubtless, arrived later, and who now threw herself at once among the soldiers. This was a handsome young lady, Mademoiselle Théroigne de Méricourt, a native of Liege, lively and passionate, like so many of the women of Liege who effected the Revolution of the fifteenth century,\* and fought valiantly against Charles the Bold. Interesting, original, and strange, with her riding-habit and hat, and a sabre by her side, speaking and confounding equally French and the *patois* of Liege, and yet eloquent. She was laughable, yet irresistible. Théroigne, impetuous, charming, and terrible, was insensible to every obstacle. She had had amours ; but then she felt but one passion,—one violent and mortal, which cost her more than life,† her love for the Revolution ; she followed it with enthusiasm, never missed a meeting of the Assembly, frequented the clubs and the public places, held a club at her own house, and received many deputies. She would have no more lovers, and declared that she would have none but the great metaphysician, the abstract, cold Abbé Sicyès, ever the enemy of women.

Théroigne, having addressed that regiment of Flanders, bewildered, gained them over, and disarmed them so completely that they gave away their cartridges like brothers to the National Guard of Versailles.

D'Estaing then sent word to the latter to withdraw. A few departed ; others replied that they would not go till the body guards had first moved. The latter were then ordered to file off. It was eight o'clock, and the evening was dark. The

\* See my *Histoire de France*, t. vi.

† A tragical story, terribly disfigured by Beaulieu and all the royalists. I entreat the people of Liege to defend the honour of their heroine.

people followed, pressed upon the body guards, and hooted after them. The guards force their way sword in hand. Some who were behind, being more molested than the rest, fired their pistols: three of the National Guard were hit, one in the face; the two others received the bullets in their clothes. Their comrades fire also by way of answer; and the body guard reply with their musketoons.

Other National Guards entered the court-yard, surrounded d'Estaing, and demanded ammunition. He was himself astonished at their enthusiasm and the boldness they displayed amid the troops: "True martyrs of enthusiasm," said he subsequently to the queen.\*

A lieutenant of Versailles declared to the guard of the artillery, that if he did not give him some gunpowder, he would blow his brains out. He gave him a barrel which was opened on the spot; and they loaded some cannon which they pointed opposite the balustrade, so as to take in flank the troops which still covered the castle, and the body guards who were returning to the square.

The people of Versailles had shown the same firmness on the other side of the Château. Five carriages drew up to the iron gates in order to depart; they said it was the queen, who was going to Trianon. The Swiss opened, but the guards shut. "It would be dangerous for her Majesty," said the commandant, "to leave the Château." The carriages were escorted back. There was no longer any chance of escape. The king was a prisoner.

The same commandant saved one of the body guard whom the crowd wanted to tear to pieces, for having fired on the people. He managed so well that they left the man; they were satisfied with tearing the horse to pieces; and they began roasting him on the *Place D'Armes*; but the crowd were too hungry to wait, and devoured it almost raw.

It was a rainy night. The crowd took shelter where they could; some burst open the gates of the great stables (*grandes écuries*), where the regiment of Flanders was stationed, and mixed pell-mell with the soldiers. Others, about four thousand in number, had remained in the Assembly. The men were

\* See one of his letters at the end vol. i., of *Deux Amis de la Liberté*.

quiet enough, but the women were impatient at that state of inaction : they talked, shouted, and made an uproar. Maillard alone could keep them quiet, and he managed to do so only by haranguing the Assembly.

What contributed to incense the crowd, was that the body guards came to the dragoons, who were at the doors of the Assembly, to ask whether they would assist them in seizing the cannon that menaced the Château. The people were about to rush upon them, when the dragoons contrived to let them escape.

At eight o'clock, there was another attempt. They brought a letter from the king, in which, without speaking of the Declaration of Rights, he promised in vague terms to allow corn to circulate freely. It is probable that, at that moment, the idea of flight was predominant at the Château. Without giving any answer to Mounier, who still remained at the door of the council, they sent this letter to engage the attention of the impatient crowd.

A singular apparition had added to the affright of the Court. A young man enters, ill-dressed, like one of the mob, and quite aghast.\* Everybody was astonished ; it was the young Duke of Richelieu who, in that disguise, had mingled with the crowd, a fresh swarm of people who had marched from Paris ; he had left them half way on the road in order to give warning to the royal family ; he had heard horrible language, atrocious threats, which made his hair stand on end. In saying this, he was so livid, that everybody turned pale.

The king's heart was beginning to fail him ; he perceived that the queen was in peril. However agonizing it was to his conscience to consecrate the legislative work of philosophy, at ten o'clock in the evening he signed the Declaration of Rights.

Mounier was at last able to depart. He hastened to resume his place as president before the arrival of that vast army from Paris, whose projects were not yet known. He re-entered the hall ; but there was no longer any Assembly ; it had broken up : the crowd, ever growing more clamorous and exacting, had demanded that the prices of bread and meat should be lowered.

\* Staël, *Considérations*, 2nd part, ch. xi.

Mounier found in his place, in the president's chair, a tall fine well-behaved woman, holding the bell in her hand, and who left the chair with reluctance. He gave orders that they were to try to collect the deputies again ; meanwhile, he announced to the people that the king had just accepted the constitutional articles. The women crowding about him, then entreated him to give them copies of them ; others said : " But, M. President, will this be very advantageous ? Will this give bread to the poor people of Paris ? " Others exclaimed : " We are very hungry. We have eaten nothing to-day." Mounier ordered bread to be fetched from the bakers'. Provisions then came in on all sides. They all began eating in the hall with much clamour.

The women, whilst eating, chatted with Mounier : " But, dear President, why did you defend that villanous *veto* ? Mind the lanterne ! " Mounier replied firmly, that they were not able to judge,—that they were mistaken ; that, for his part, he would rather expose his life than betray his conscience. This reply pleased them very much, and from that moment they showed him great respect and friendship.\*

Mirabeau alone would have been able to obtain a hearing, and silence the uproar. He did not care to do so. He was certainly uneasy. According to several witnesses, he had walked about in the evening among the people, with a large sabre, saying to those he met, " Children, we are for you." Afterwards, he had gone to bed. Dumont, the Genevese, went in quest of him, and brought him back to the Assembly. As soon as he arrived, he called out, in his voice of thunder, " I should like to know how people have the assurance to come and trouble our meeting. M. President, make them respect the Assembly ! " The women shouted " Bravo ! " They became more quiet. In order to kill time, they resumed the discussion on the criminal laws.

'Twas in a gallery (says Dumont) where a fish-woman was acting as commander-in-chief, and directing about a hundred women, especially girls, who, at a signal from her, shouted or remained silent. She was calling the deputies familiarly by their names, or else would inquire, " Who is that speaking

\* Mounier, at the end of the *Exposé justificatif*.

yonder? Make that chatterbox hold his prating! That is not the question! The thing is to have bread! Let them rather hear our darling little Mirabeau!" Then all the women would shout, "Our darling mother Mirabeau!" But he would not speak.\*

Lafayette, who had left Paris between five and six in the evening, did not arrive till after twelve. We must now go back, and follow him from noon to midnight.

About eleven, being informed that the Hôtel-de-Ville was invaded, he repaired thither, found the crowd dispersed, and began dictating a despatch for the king. La Grève was full of the paid and unpaid National Guards, who were muttering from rank to rank that they ought to march to Versailles. Many French ex-guards, especially, regretted having lost their ancient privilege of guarding the king, and wanted to recover it. Some of them went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and knocked at the bureau, where Lafayette was dictating. A handsome young grenadier, who spoke admirably, said to him firmly:

"My General, the people are without bread; misery is extreme. The committee of subsistence either deceives you, or are themselves deceived. This state of things cannot last; there is but one remedy: let us go to Versailles. They say the king is a fool; we will place the crown on the head of his son; a council of regency shall be named, and everything will go on better."

Lafayette was very firm and obstinate, but the crowd was still more so. He believed very properly in his influence over the people: he was, however, able to see that he had over-rated it. In vain did he harangue the people; in vain did he remain several hours in the Grève on his white horse, sometimes speaking, sometimes imposing silence with a gesture, or else, by way of having something to do, patting his horse with his hand. The difficulty was growing more urgent; it was no longer his National Guards who pressed him, but bodies from the Faubourgs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau,—men who would listen to nothing. They spoke to the general by eloquent signs, preparing the lamp for him, and taking aim at him. Then he got down from his horse, and wanted to re-enter the

\* Etienne Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 181.

Hôtel-de-Ville ; but his grenadiers barred the passage : “ *Morbleu !* general,” said they, “ you shall stop with us ; you would not abandon us ! ”

Luckily, a letter is brought down from the Hôtel-de-Ville ; they authorise the general to depart, “ seeing it is impossible to refuse.” “ Let us march,” said he, though he did so with regret. The order was received with shouts of joy.

Of the thirty thousand men of the National Guard, fifteen thousand marched forth. Add to this number a few thousands of the people. The insult offered to the national cockade was a noble motive for the expedition. Everybody applauded them on their passage. An elegantly-dressed assemblage on the terrace by the water-side looked on and applauded. At Passy, where the Duke of Orleans had hired a house, Madame de Genlis was at her post, shouting, and waving her handkerchief, doing all she could to be seen. The bad weather caused them to march rather slowly. Many of the National Guards, so eager before, now began to cool. This was not like the fine weather on the 14th of July. They were drenched with a cold October rain. Some of them stopped on the road ; others grumbled, and walked on. “ It is disagreeable,” said the rich tradesmen, “ for people who go to their country-houses in fine weather only in coaches, to march four leagues in the rain.” Others said, “ We will not do all this drudgery for nothing.” And they then laid all the blame on the queen, uttering mad threats, and appearing very malignant. The Château had been expecting them in the greatest anxiety. They thought that Lafayette only pretended that he was forced, but that really he availed himself willingly of the opportunity. They wanted to see whether, at eleven o'clock, the crowd being then dispersed, the carriages could pass through the Dragon gates. The National Guard of Versailles was on the watch, and blocked the passage.

The queen, however, would not depart alone. She rightly judged that there was no safe refuge for her, if she separated from the king. About two hundred noblemen, several of whom were deputies, offered themselves to defend her, and asked her for an order to take horses from her stables. She authorised them, in case, she said, the king should be in danger.

Lafayette, before entering Versailles, made his troops renew



their oath of fidelity to the law and the king. He sent him notice of his arrival, and the king replied : " that he would see him with pleasure, and that he had just accepted *his* Declaration of Rights."

Lafayette entered the Château alone, to the great astonishment of the guards and everybody else. In the *œil-de-bœuf*, one of the courtiers was so foolish as to say : " There goes Cromwell." To which Lafayette replied very aptly, " Sir, Cromwell would not have entered alone."

" He appeared very calm," says Madame De Staël (who was present); " nobody ever saw him otherwise; his modesty suffered from the importance of his position." The stronger he appeared, the more respectful was his behaviour. The outrage, moreover, to which he had been subjected, made him more of a Royalist than ever.

The king intrusted to the National Guard the outer posts of the castle; the body guards preserved those within. Even the outside was not entirely intrusted to Lafayette. On one of his patrols wishing to pass into the park, the entrance was refused. The park was occupied by body guards and other troops; till two in the morning\* they awaited the king, in case he should at last resolve to fly. At two o'clock only, having been pacified by Lafayette, they told them they might go to Rambouillet.

The Assembly had broken up at three o'clock. The people had dispersed, and retired to rest, as they could, in the churches and elsewhere. Maillard and many of the women, among whom was Louison Chabry, had departed for Paris, shortly after the arrival of Lafayette, carrying with them the decrees on corn and the Declaration of Rights.

Lafayette had much trouble to find lodging for his National Guards; wet, and worn out, they were trying to dry themselves and to get food. At last, believing everything quiet, he also went to the Hôtel de Noailles, and slept, as a man sleeps after twenty hours' fatigue and agitation.

Many people did not sleep: especially those who having come from Paris in the evening, had not undergone the fatigue of the preceding day. The first expedition, in which the women

\* Till that hour, they still thought of doing so, if we may believe the testimony of M. de la Tour-du-Pin.—*Mémoires de Lafayette*, ii.

were predominant, being very spontaneous, natural as it were, and urged by necessity, had not cost any bloodshed. Maillard had had the glory of maintaining some sort of order in that disorderly crowd. The natural *crescendo* ever observable in such insurrections, scarcely left room to hope that the second expedition would pass off as quietly. True, it had been formed before the eyes of the National Guard, and as if in concert with it. Nevertheless there were men there who were determined to act without them; many were furious fanatics, who would have liked to kill the queen;\* others who pretended to be so, and seemed to be the most violent, were simply a class of men ever superabundant when the police is weak, namely, thieves. The latter calculated the chances of breaking into the Château. They had not found much in the Bastille worth taking. But, what a delightful prospect was opened for pillage in the wonderful palace of Versailles, where the riches of France had been amassed for more than a century!

At five in the morning, before daylight, a large crowd was already prowling about the gates, armed with pikes, spits, and scythes. They had no guns. Seeing some body guards as sentinels at the gates, they forced the National Guards to fire on them; the latter obeyed, taking care to fire too high.

In that crowd, wandering or standing round fires that had been made in the square, was a little hump-backed lawyer, Verrières, mounted on a large horse; he was considered very violent; they had been waiting for him ever since the preceding evening, saying they would do nothing without him. Leconte was likewise there, going to and fro haranguing the crowd. The people of Versailles were perhaps more inveterate than the Parisians, having been long enraged against the court and the body guards; they had lost an opportunity, the night before, of falling on them, which they regretted, and wanted now to pay them what they owed them. Among them were several locksmiths and blacksmiths, (of the manufactory of

\* I do not see in the *Ami du peuple* how Marat can be accused of having been the first to suggest sanguinary violence. What is certain is he was very restless: "M. Marat flies to Versailles, returns like lightning and makes alone as much noise as the four trumpets of the Day of Judgment, shouting: 'O death! arise!'"—Camille Desmoulins, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, iii., p. 359.

arms?) rough men, who strike hard, and who, moreover, ever thirsty at the forge, are also hard drinkers.

About six o'clock, this crowd, composed of Parisians and people of Versailles, seale or force the gates, and advance into the courts with fear and hesitation. The first who was killed, if we believe the Royalists, died from a fall, having slipped in the marble court. According to another and a more likely version, he was shot dead by the body guard.

Some took to the left, toward the queen's apartment, others to the right, toward the chapel stairs, nearer the king's apartment. On the left, a Parisian running unarmed, among the foremost, met one of the body guard, who stabbed him with a knife. The guardsman was killed. On the right, the foremost was a militia-man of the guard of Versailles, a diminutive locksmith, with sunken eyes, almost bald, and his hands elapped by the heat of the forge.\* This man and another, without answering the guard, who had come down a few steps and was speaking to him on the stairs, strove to pull him down by his belt, and hand him over to the crowd rushing behind. The guards pulled him towards them; but two of them were killed. They all fled along the grand gallery, as far as the *œil-de-bœuf*, between the apartments of the king and the queen. Other guards were already there.

The most furious attack had been made in the direction of the queen's apartment. The sister of her *femme-de-chambre* Madame de Campan, having half opened the door, saw a guardsman covered with blood, trying to stop the furious rabble. She quickly bolted that door and the next, put a petticoat on the queen, and tried to lead her to the king. An awful moment! The door was bolted on the other side! They knock again and again. The king was not within; he had gone round by another passage to reach the queen. At that moment a pistol was fired, and then a gun, close to them. "My friends, my dear friends," cried the queen, bursting into tears, "save me and my children." They brought her the dauphin. At length the door was opened, and she rushed into the king's apartment.

\* Deposition of Miomandre, one of the body guards — *Moniteur*, i., p. 566.

The crowd was knocking louder and louder to enter the *œil-de-bœuf*. The guards barricaded the place, piling up benches, stools, and other pieces of furniture; the lower panel was burst in. They expected nothing but death; but suddenly the uproar ceased, and a kind clear voice exclaimed: "Open!" As they did not obey, the same voice repeated: "Come, open to us, body guard; we have not forgotten that you men saved us French Guards at Fontenoy."

It was indeed the French Guards, now become National Guards, with the brave and generous Hoche, then a simple sergeant-major—it was the people, who had come to save the nobility. They opened, threw themselves into one another's arms, and wept.

At that moment, the king, believing the passage forced, and mistaking his saviours for his assassins, opened his door himself, by an impulse of courageous humanity, saying to those without: "Do not hurt my guards."

The danger was past, and the crowd dispersed; the thieves alone were unwilling to be inactive. Wholly engaged in their own business, they were pillaging and moving away the furniture. The grenadiers turned that rabble out of the castle.

A scene of horror was passing in the court. A man with a long beard was chopping with a hatchet to cut off the heads of two dead bodies,—the guards killed on the stairs. That wretch, whom some took for a famous brigand of the south, was merely a *modèle* who used to sit at the Academy of Painting; for that day, he had put on the picturesque costume of an antique slave, which astonished everybody, and added to their fear.\*

\* His name was Nicolas. According to his landlord, the man had never given any proof of violence or ill-nature. Children used to take that terrible man by the beard. He was in fact a vain half-silly person who fancied he was doing something grand, audacious, and original, and perhaps wanted to realize the bloody scenes he had beheld in pictures or at the theatre. When he had committed the horrible deed, and everybody had recoiled from him, he suddenly felt the dreariness of that strange solitude, and sought, under different pretexts, to get into the conversation, asking a servant for a pinch of snuff, and a Swiss of the castle for some wine, which he paid for, boasting, and trying to encourage and comfort himself.—See the depositions in the *Moniteur*. The heads were carried to Paris on pikes; one by a child. According to some, they departed the same morning; others say, a little before the king, and,

Lafayette, awakened but too late, then arrived on horseback. He saw one of the body guards whom they had taken and dragged near the body of one of those killed by the guards, in order to kill him by way of retaliation. "I have given my word to the king," cried Lafayette, "to save his men. Cause my word to be respected." The man was saved; not so Lafayette. A furious fellow cried out: "Kill him!" He gave orders to have him arrested, and the obedient crowd dragged him accordingly towards the general, dashing his head against the pavement.

He then entered the castle. Madame Adelaide, the king's aunt, went up to him and embraced him: "It is you," cried she, "who have saved us." He ran to the king's cabinet. Who would believe that etiquette still subsisted? A grand officer stopped him for a moment, and then allowed him to pass: "Sir," said he seriously, "the king grants you *les grandes entrées*."

The king showed himself at the balcony, and was welcomed with the unanimous shout of "God save the King! *Vive le Roi!*"

"The King at Paris!" was the second shout, which was taken up by the people, and repeated by the whole army.

The queen was standing near a window with her daughter beside her, and the dauphin before her. The child, playing with his sister's hair, cried: "Mamma, I am hungry!" O hard reaction of necessity! Hunger passes from the people to the king! O Providence! Providence! Pardon! This one is but a child!

At that moment several voices raised a formidable shout: "The queen!" The people wanted to see her in the balcony. She hesitated: "What!" said she, "all alone?" "Madam, be not afraid," said Lafayette. She went, but not alone, holding an admirable safeguard,—in one hand her daughter, in the other her son. The court of marble was terrible, in awful commotion, like the sea in its fury; the National Guards, lining every side, could not answer for the centre; there were

consequently, in presence of Lafayette, which is not likely. The body guard had killed five men of the crowd or National Guards of Versailles, and the latter seven body guards.



fire-arms, and men blind with rage. Lafayette's conduct was admirable ; for that trembling woman, he risked his popularity, his destiny, his very life ; he appeared with her on the balcony, and kissed her hand.\*

The crowd felt all that ; the emotion was unanimous. They saw there the woman and the mother, nothing more. " Oh ! how beautiful she is ! What ! is that the queen ? How she fondles her children ! " Noble people ! may God bless you for your clemency and forgetfulness !

The king was trembling with fear, when the queen went to the balcony. The step having succeeded : " My guards," said he to Lafayette, " could you not also do something for them ? " " Give me one." Lafayette led him to the balcony, told him to take the oath, and show the national cockade in his hat. The guard kissed it, and the people shouted : "*Vivent les gardes-du-corps !*" The grenadiers, for more safety, took the caps of the guards, and gave them theirs, so that, by this mixture of costume, the people could no longer fire on the guards without running the risk of killing them.

The king was very reluctant to quit Versailles. To leave the royal residence was in his estimation the same thing as to abandon royalty. A few days before, he had rejected the entreaties of Malouet and other deputies, who in order to be further from Paris, had begged him to transfer the Assembly to Compiègne. And now, he must leave Versailles to go to Paris,—pass through that terrible crowd. What would befall the queen ? He shuddered to think.

The king sent to entreat the Assembly to meet at the Château. Once there, the Assembly and the king being together, and supported by Lafayette, some of the deputies were to beseech the king not to go to Paris. That request

\* By far the most curious deposition is that of the woman La Varenne,—the valiant portress of whom we have spoken. Therein we may perceive how a legend begins. This woman was an eye-witness,—had a hand in the business ; she received a wound in saving one of the body guard ; and she sees and hears whatever is uppermost in her mind ; she adds it honestly : " The queen appeared in the balcony ; M. de Lafayette said : ' The queen has been deceived. She *promises to love her people*, to be attached to them, as Jesus Christ is to his Church.' And as a token of approval, the queen, shedding tears, twice raised her hand. The king asked pardon for his guards," &c.



was to have been represented to the people as the wish of the Assembly. All that great commotion would subside; fatigue, lassitude, and hunger would gradually disperse the people; they would depart of their own accord.

The Assembly, which was then forming, appeared wavering and undecided.

Nobody had any fixed resolution or determination. That popular movement had taken all by surprise. The most keensighted had expected nothing of this. Mirabeau had not foreseen it, neither had Sièyes. The latter said pettishly, when he received the first tidings of it: "I cannot understand it; it is going all wrong."

I think he meant to say: "contrary to the Revolution." Sièyes, at that time, was still a revolutionist, and perhaps rather favourably inclined towards the branch of Orleans. For the king to quit Versailles, his old court, and live at Paris among the people, was, doubtless, a fine chance for Louis XVI. to become popular again. If the queen (killed, or in exile) had not followed him, the Parisians would, very probably, have felt an affection for the king. They had, at all times, entertained a predilection for that fat, good-tempered man, whose very corpulency gave him an air of pious paternal good-nature, quite to the taste of the crowd. We have already seen that the market-women used to call him *a good papa*: that was the very idea of the people.

This removal to Paris, which so much frightened the king, frightened, in a contrary manner, such as wanted to strengthen and continue the Revolution, and, still more, those who, for patriotic or personal views, would have liked to make the Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general (or something better.)

The very worst thing that could have happened for the latter, who was foolishly accused of wishing to kill the queen, was, that the queen should have been killed, and that the king, freed from that living cause of unpopularity, should return to Paris, and fall into the hands of such men as Bailly or Lafayette.

The Duke of Orleans was perfectly innocent of the movement of the 5th of October. He could neither help it, nor take advantage of it. On the 5th and the following night, he went restlessly from place to place. Depositions prove that he was seen everywhere between Paris and Versailles, but

that he did nothing.\* Between eight and nine in the morning of the 6th, so soon after the massacre, that the court of the castle was still stained with blood, he went and showed himself to the people, with an enormous cockade in his hat, laughing, and flourishing a switch in his hand.

To return to the Assembly. There were not forty members who repaired to the castle. Most of them were already in the entrance hall, and rather undecided how to act. The crowds of persons who thronged the tribunes increased their indecision. At the first word said about sitting at the Château, they began vociferating. Mirabeau then arose, and, according to his custom of disguising his obedience to the people in haughty language, said, "that the liberty of the Assembly would be compromised if they deliberated in the palace of kings; that it did not become their dignity to quit their usual place of meeting; and that a deputation was sufficient." Young Barnave supported the motion. Mounier, the president, opposed it, but in vain.

At length, they heard that the king had consented to depart for Paris; the Assembly, on Mirabeau's proposition, voted, that, for their present session, they are inseparable from the king.

The day was advancing. It was not far from one o'clock. They must depart, and quit Versailles. Farewell to ancient monarchy!

A hundred deputies surround the king; a whole army,—a whole people. He departs from the palace of Louis XIV., never to return.

The whole multitude begins to move: they march off towards Paris, some before the king, and some behind. Men and women, all go as they can, on foot or on horseback, in coaches and carts, on carriages of cannon, or whatever they could find. They had the good fortune to meet with a large convoy of flour,—a blessing for the famished town. The women carried large loaves on pikes, others, branches of poplar, already tinted

\* All that he appears to have done, was to authorise the purveyor of the Assembly, on the evening of the 5th, to furnish provisions to the people who were in the hall. There is nothing to show that he acted, to any extent, from the 15th of July to the 5th of October, except in an awkward and weak attempt which Danton made in his favour with Lafayette.—See the *Mémoires* of the latter.

by autumn. They were all very merry, and amiable in their own fashion, except a few jokes addressed to the queen. "We are bringing back," cried they, "the baker, his wife, and the little shop-boy." They all thought they could never starve, as long as they had the king with them. They were all still royalists, and full of joy at being able at length to put their *good papa* in good keeping: he was not very clever; he had broken his word: it was his wife's fault; but, once in Paris, good women would not be wanting, who would give him better advice.

The whole spectacle was at once gay, melancholy, joyous, and gloomy. They were full of hope, but the sky was overcast, and the weather unfortunately did not favour the holiday. The rain fell in torrents; they marched but slowly, and in muddy roads. Now and then, several fired off guns, by way of rejoicing, or to discharge their arms.

The royal carriage, surrounded by an escort, and with Lafayette at the door, moved like a hearse. The queen felt uneasy. Was it sure she should arrive? She asked Lafayette what he thought, and he inquired of Moreau de Méry, who, having presided at the Hôtel-de-Ville on the famous days of the taking of the Bastille, was well acquainted with the matter. He replied in these significant words: "I doubt whether the queen could arrive alone at the Tuileries; but, once at the Hôtel-de-Ville, she will be able to return."

Behold the king at Paris, in the place where he ought to be, in the very heart of France. Let us hope he will be worthy of it.

✓ The Revolution of the 6th of October, necessary, natural, and justifiable, if any ever was; entirely spontaneous, unforeseen, and truly popular; belongs especially to the women, as that of the 14th of July does to the men. The men took the Bastille, and the women took the king.

On the 1st of October, everything was marred by the ladies of Versailles; on the 6th, all was repaired by the women of Paris.

## BOOK III.

OCTOBER 6, 1789, TO JULY 14, 1790.

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### CHAPTER I.

UNANIMITY TO REVIVE THE KINGLY POWER (OCTOBER, 1789.)—BURST OF FRATERNAL ENTHUSIASM.—ENTHUSIASTIC TRANSPORT OF BROTHERHOOD, (OCTOBER TO JULY).

The Love of the People for the King.—Generosity of the People.—Their Tendency towards Unity; their Confederations.—(October to July.)—Lafayette and Mirabeau for the King.—The Assembly for the King, October, 1789.—The King was not Captive in October.

EARLY in the morning of the 7th of October, the Tuileries were crowded with an excited multitude, impatient to see their king. Throughout the day, whilst he was receiving the homage of the constituted authorities, the crowd was watching without, and anxiously expecting to behold him. They saw, or thought they saw him through the distant windows; and whenever any one was happy enough to catch a glimpse of him, he pointed him out to his neighbour, exclaiming, "Look! there he is!" He was obliged to show himself in the balcony, where he was received with unanimous acclamations; nay, he felt obliged to descend even into the gardens, to make a still closer demonstration of sympathy for the enthusiasm of the people.

His sister, Madame Elizabeth, an innocent young person, was so affected by it, that she caused her windows to be opened, and supped in presence of the multitude. Women with their children drew near, blessing her, and extolling her beauty.

On the very preceding evening, that of the 6th of October, everybody had felt quite sure of that people of whom they

had been so much afraid. When the king and the queen appeared by torch-light at the Hôtel-de-Ville, a roar like thunder arose from La Grève,—shouts of joy, love, and gratitude, towards the king who had come to live among them. The men wept like children, shook hands, and embraced each other.\*

“The Revolution is ended,” cried they; “here is the king delivered from that Palace of Versailles, from his courtiers and advisers.” And indeed that pernicious charm which for more than a century had held royalty captive, remote from mankind, in a world of statues and automata still more artificial, was now, thank heaven, dissolved. The king was restored again to true nature,—to life and truth. Returning from that long exile, he was restored to his home; he resumed his proper place, and found himself re-established in the kingly element,—which is no other than the people. And where else could a king ever breathe and live?

Live amongst us, O king, and be at length free; for, free you have never been; but have ever acted, and let others act, against your will. Every morning you have been made to do what you repented of before night; yet you obeyed every day. After having been so long the slave of caprice, reign at length according to the law; for this is royalty,—this is liberty; and such is the kingdom of God.

Such were the thoughts of the people, generous and sympathetic, without either rancour or distrust. Mingling, for the first time, in the crowd of lords and elegant ladies, they behaved towards them with great respect. Nay, they looked kindly upon the body-guards themselves, as they walked along arm in arm with the brave French guards, their friends and protectors. They cheered them both, in order to reassure and console their enemies of the preceding day.

Let it be for ever remembered that at this period, so falsely described, or perverted by hate, the heart of France was full of magnanimity, clemency, and forgiveness. Nay, even in the acts of resistance, provoked on all sides by the aristocracy,—in those energetic measures whereby the people declare themselves

\* All this, and the following, is quoted from royalist writers, Weber, i., 257; Beaulieu, ii., 203, &c. Their testimony is conformable to that of the *Amis de la liberté*, iv., 2—6.

ready to strike, they threaten but forgive. Metz denounces its rebellious parliament to the National Assembly, and then intercedes for it. Brittany, in the formidable federation that she formed in the middle of winter (January), showed herself both strong and merciful. One hundred and fifty thousand armed men there engaged themselves to withstand the enemies of the law ; and the youthful commander, who, at the head of their deputies, swore with his sword on the altar, added to his oath : “ If they become good citizens, we will forgive them.”

Those great confederacies, which were made throughout France for eight or nine months, are the characteristic feature, the stamp of originality, of that period. They had at first a defensive character, being formed for mutual protection against unknown enemies, the *brigands*, and against the aristocracy. Next, these brothers being up in arms together, wished also to live together ; they sympathised in the wants of their fellow-citizens, and pledged themselves to secure a free circulation for corn, and to forward provisions from one province to another, from those who had but little to those who had none. At length, confidence is restored, and food is less scarce ; but the confederations continue, without any other necessity than that of the heart : *To unite*, as they said, *and love one another*.

The towns at first unite together, in order to protect themselves against the nobles. Next, the nobles being attacked by the peasants, or by wandering bands of paupers, and the castles burnt ; the townsmen sally forth in arms, and hasten to protect the castles and defend the nobles, their enemies. These nobles go in crowds to take refuge in the towns, among those who have saved them, and take the civic oath (February and March).

Struggles between town and country places are happily of short duration. The peasant soon perceives the course of events, and, in his turn, confederates for order and the constitution. I have now before me the *procès-verbaux* of a number of those rural confederations, and I perceive in them the patriotic spirit, in spite of the simple language in which it is expressed, bursting forth as energetically as in the towns, and perhaps even more so.

There is no longer any rampart between men. One would think that the walls of cities had fallen. Great confederations of the towns are often held in the country ; and



often the peasants, in orderly bands, with the mayor or *cure* at their head, go and fraternise with the inhabitants of the towns.

All were orderly, and all armed. The National Guard, at that period (a circumstance worthy of memory), was generally composed of everybody.\*

Everybody is in motion and all march forth as in the time of the Crusades. Whither are they all marching thus in groups of cities, villages, and provinces? What Jerusalem attracts thus a whole nation, attracting it not abroad, but uniting it, concentrating it within itself . . . It is one more potent than that of Judea; it is the Jerusalem of hearts, the holy unity of fraternity, the great living city, made of men. It was built in less than a year, and since then has been called Native Land.

Such is my course in this third book of the Revolution; obstacles of every kind, outcries, acts of violence, and bitter disputes may delay me, but shall not deter me from my task. The 14th of July has proved to me the unanimity of Paris, and another 14th of July will presently show me the unanimity of France.

How was it possible that the king, the ancient object of the

\* Everybody *without exception* in the rural districts. Amid the panic terrors renewed every moment for more than a year, everybody was armed, at least with agricultural implements, and appeared thus armed at the reviews and most solemn festivals. In towns, the organisation varied; the permanent committees which formed there, on the news of the taking of the Bastille, opened registers in which the well-disposed of every class of men went and wrote their names; wherever there was any danger, these volunteers were absolutely everybody without exception. The unlucky question about the uniform first gave rise to divisions; then select bodies were formed, much disliked by all the others. The uniform was exacted very early at Paris, and the National Guard there became reduced to some thirty thousand men. But everywhere else there were but few uniforms; at most facings were added varying in colour, according to each town. At length the blue and red became predominant. The proposition to require a uniform throughout France was not made till July 18th, 1790. On the 28th of April, 1791, the Assembly limited the title of national guard to active citizens, or primary electors; the number of these electors (who, as proprietors, or tenants, paid taxes to the value of three days' labour, or three francs at most) amounted to four million four hundred thousand men. And even of this number the majority, being workmen and living from hand to mouth by daily labour, were unable to continue the enormous sacrifice of time which the service of the national guard then required.

people's affection, should alone be forgotten in this universal brotherly embrace? On the contrary, he was its first object. In spite of his being accompanied by the ever melancholy, hard-hearted, and rancorous queen; and notwithstanding, the abject thralldom in which he was evidently held by his bigoted scruples, and the bondage also in which his affection for his wife enabled the latter to keep him, the people were obstinately bent on placing all their hopes in the king.

A fact ridiculous to state, is, that the dread inspired by the events of the 6th of October had created a multitude of royalists. That terrible surprise, that nocturnal phantasmagoria, had seriously startled the imagination; and people became more closely attached to the king. The Assembly, especially, had never felt so well disposed in his favour. They had been frightened; and even ten days later it was with great repugnance that they went to assemble in that moody Paris of October, amid that stormy multitude. One hundred and fifty deputies preferred to take passports; and Mounier and Lally absconded.

The two first men in France, Lafayette and Mirabeau, one the most popular, the other the most eloquent, were royalists on their return to Paris.

Lafayette had been mortified at being led to Versailles, though apparently the leader of the people. He was piqued about his involuntary triumph almost as much as the king himself. He effected two measures on his return: he emboldened the municipality to prosecute Marat's sanguinary newspaper at the Châtelet (tribunal); and he went in person to the Duke of Orleans, intimidated him, spoke to him in strong and resolute terms, both at his house and before the king, giving him to understand that after the 6th of October, his presence at Paris was troublesome, furnished pretexts, and excluded tranquillity. By these means he induced him to go to London; but when the duke wanted to return, Lafayette sent him word that, the day after his return, he would have to fight a duel with him.

Mirabeau, thus deprived of his duke, and plainly perceiving that he should never be able to derive any advantage from him, turned, with all the assurance of superior power, like an indispensable person whom it is impossible to reject, and went over to the side of Lafayette. (October 10th—20th).

He frankly proposed to him to overthrow Necker, and to share the government between themselves.\* This was certainly the only chance of safety that remained to the king. But Lafayette neither liked nor esteemed Mirabeau; and the Court detested them both.

At one time, for a brief space, the two remaining powers, popularity and genius, agreed together for the advantage of royalty. An accident that happened just at the door of the Assembly, two or three days after they arrived in Paris, alarmed them, and induced them to desire order, cost what it would. A cruel mistake caused a baker to lose his life (October 21).† The murderer was immediately judged and hanged. This was an opportunity for the municipality to demand a law of severity and force. The Assembly decreed a martial law, which armed the municipalities with the right of calling out the troops and citizen guard for dispersing the mob. At the same time, they decreed that crimes of lèse-nation should be tried by an old royal tribunal, at the Châtelet,—a petty tribunal for so great a mission. Buzot and Robespierre said it was necessary to create a high national court. Mirabeau ventured so far as to say that all these measures were powerless, but *that it was necessary to restore strength to the executive power*, and not allow it to take advantage of its own annihilation.

This happened on the 21st of October. What progress since the 6th! In the course of a fortnight, the king had recovered so much ground, that the bold orator placed frankly the safety of France in the strength of the kingly power.

Lafayette wrote to the fugitive Mounier in Dauphiné, where he was lamenting the king's captivity, and inciting people to civil war:‡ that the king was by no means captive, that he would habitually inhabit the capital, and that he was about to recommence his hunting parties. This was not a falsehood.

\* Consult the three principal witnesses—Mirabeau, Lafayette, and Alexandre de Lameth.

† This crime, committed at the door of the Assembly, and which caused them to vote forthwith coercive laws, could not have benefited any but the royalists. I am, however, of opinion that it was the mere result of accident, and of the distrust and animosity engendered by misery.

‡ M. de Lally has himself assured us that his friend Mounier used to say, "I think we must fight for it."—See Bailly, iii., 223, *note*.

Lafayette in fact entreated the king to go forth and show himself, and not give credit to the report of his captivity by a voluntary seclusion.\*

No doubt but Louis XVI. could, at that period, have easily withdrawn either to Rouen, as Mirabeau advised him, or to Metz, and the army commanded by Bouillé, which the queen desired.

## CHAPTER II.

### RESISTANCE.—THE CLERGY (OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER, 1789.)

Great Misery.—Necessity of taking back the Estates of the Clergy.—They were not Proprietors.—Protestations of the Victims of the Clergy.—Seizure of the Jura, Monks and Nuns, Protestants, Jews, and Actors.

THE gloomy winter on which we are now entering was not horribly cold like that of 1789; God took compassion on France. Otherwise, there would have been no possibility either of enduring it or of living. The general misery had increased: there was no labour, no work. At that period, the nobles were emigrating, or at least quitting their castles and the country, then hardly safe, and settling in the towns, where they remained close and quiet, in the expectation of events; several of them were preparing for flight, and quietly packing up their trunks. If they acted on their estates, it was to demand money and not to give relief; they collected in haste whatever was owing, the arrears of feudal rights. Hence, a scarcity of money, a cessation of labour, and a frightful increase of beggars in every town,—nearly two hundred thousand in Paris! Others would have come, by millions, if the municipalities were not obliged to keep their own paupers. Each of them, throughout the winter, drained itself in feeding its poor, till every resource was exhausted; and the rich, no longer receiving any pensions, descended almost to the level of paupers. Everybody complains and implores the National Assembly. If things remain in this state, its task will be no less than to feed the whole nation

\* Lafayette, ii., 418, *note*.

But the people must not die. There is, after all, one resource, a patrimony in reserve, which they do not enjoy. It was on their account and to feed them that our charitable ancestors exhausted their fortunes in pious foundations, and endowed the ecclesiastics, the dispensers of charity, with the best part of their possessions. The clergy had so well kept and augmented the property of the poor, that at length it comprised one-fifth of the lands of the kingdom, and was estimated at four thousand millions of francs (160,000,000*l.*)

The people, these paupers really so rich, now go and knock at the door of the church, their own mansion, to ask for a part of a property the whole of which is their own—*Panem ! propter Deum !* \*.—It would be cruel to let this proprietor, this member of the family, this lawful heir, starve on the threshold.

Give, if you are Christians ; the poor are the members of Christ. Give, if you are citizens ; for the people are the living city. Pay back, if you are honest ; for this property was only a deposit.

Restore, and the nation will give you more. The question is not to cast yourselves into an abyss in order to fill it up ; you are not asked to sacrifice yourselves, as new martyrs, for the people. On the contrary, the question is to come to your own assistance and to save yourselves.

In order to understand this, it must be remembered that the body of the clergy, monstrously rich in comparison to the nation, was also, in itself, a monster of injustice and inequality. Though the head of that body was enormously swollen and bloated, its lower members were meagre and starving : whilst one priest possessed an income of a million, another had but two hundred francs a year.†

In the project of the Assembly, which did not appear till the spring, this was all altered. The country curates and vicars were to receive from the state about sixty millions, and the bishops only three. Hence their cry : religion is destroyed ; Jesus is angry ; the Virgin is weeping in the churches of the south, and in La Vendée ; and hence all the phantasmagoria necessary to incite the peasants to rebellion and slaughter.

\* "Bread ! for the love of God !"

† An English reader, unacquainted with French money, has only to bear in mind that 100 francs are equal to 4*l.* sterling.—C. C.



The Assembly wished also to give pensions of thirty-three millions to the monks and nuns, and twelve millions to separate ecclesiastics, &c. They would have earried the general pay of the elergy to the enormous sum of one hundred and thirty-three millions; which, by suppressions, would have been reduced to the half. This was acting most generously. The most insignificant curate was to have (exclusive of house, presbytery, and garden) at least twelve hundred francs a year. To tell the truth, the whole of the elergy (except a few hundred men) would have risen from misery to comfort; so that what was called the spoliation of the elergy, was really a donation.

The prelates made a grand, heroic resistance. It was necessary to return to the point three times and make three distinct attacks (October, December, and April), to get from them what was only justice and restitution. It is very easy to see upon what these men of God had set their life and heart: *their property*! They defended it, as the early Christians had defended the faith!

Their arguments failed them, but not so their rhetoric. Now, they indulged in threatening prophecies. If you touch a property holy and sacred beyond all others, they will all be in danger; the right of property expires in the mind of the people. To-morrow, the people will come to demand the agrarian law! Another added meekly: Even though you ruin the clergy, you would not gain much; the clergy, alas! are so poor, and in debt moreover; their estates, if no longer administered by them, would never cover their debts.

The debate had begun on the 10th of October. Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, who had been employed for the clergy, and wanted now to do business at their expense, was the first who broke the ice and ventured upon this slippery ground, and limped along avoiding the dangerous point of the question, saying only: "That the clergy were not proprietors in the same sense as other proprietors."

To which Mirabeau added: "Property belongs to the nation."

The legists of the Assembly proved superabundantly: first, that the clergy were *not proprietors* (able to use and abuse); secondly, that they were *not possessors* (the canon law forbidding them to possess); thirdly, that they were *not even tenants*, but depositaries, administrators at most, and dispensers.



What produced more effect than the dispute of words was, that at the very moment when the axe was laid at the foot of the tree, dumb witnesses appeared, who, without making any deposition against it, showed all the injustice and barbarity that this fatal tree had covered with its shadow.

The clergy still possessed serfs in the time of the Revolution. The whole of the eighteenth century had passed away, together with all the liberators, both Rousseau and Voltaire, whose last thought was the enfranchisement of the Jura. Yet the priest had still his serfs !

Feudalism had blushed at its own misdeeds, and, in various ways, had abdicated those shameful rights. Much to its honour, it had rejected the last remnants on the night of the 4th of August. But the priest still possessed his serfs !

On the 22nd of October, one of them, named Jean Jacob, a peasant-tenant in mortmain of the Jura, a venerable man more than a hundred and twenty years old, was led forward by his children and requested the favour of thanking the Assembly for their decrees of the 4th of August. Great was the emotion. The National Assembly all arose in presence of that patriarch of mankind, and made him sit covered. A noble mark of respect paid to old age, and a reparation also to the poor serf, for so long an insult to the rights of humanity. This man had been a serf for half a century under Louis XIV., and for eighty years since then. And he still remained a serf : the decrees of the 4th of August were only in a state of general declaration ; nothing had been executed. Bondage was not expressly abolished till March, 1790 ; and the old man died in December ; so, this last of the serfs never saw the light of liberty.

On the same day (October 22nd) M. de Castellane, taking advantage of the emotion of the Assembly, demanded that the thirty-five prisons in Paris, and those of France, should be visited, and that prisons far more secret and horrible than the royal Bastilles, the ecclesiastical dungeons, should especially be opened. It was at length most necessary that on such a day of resurrection the sun should pierce through the veil of mystery, and that the beneficent light of the law should, for the first time, illumine those judgment-seats of darkness, those subterraneous dungeons, those *in pace*,\* where often in their furious

\* Cells in which the superiors imprisoned for life.—C. C.

monastic hatred or jealousy, or on account of their amours, still more atrocious than their hatred, the monks buried their brethren alive.

Alas ! what were convents altogether but so many *in pace*, in which families abandoned and forgot such of their members as happened to be a burden, and whom they sacrificed for the others ? These persons were not able, like the serf of Jura, to crawl as far as the feet of the National Assembly to demand their liberty, and embrace the tribunal instead of the altar. At most, if they durst, they might with great difficulty, at a distance, and by letter, make known their complaints. A nun wrote on the 28th of October, timidly, and in general terms, asking nothing for herself, but entreating the Assembly to legislate on ecclesiastical vows. The Assembly durst not at that time come to any resolution ; they merely suspended the pronouncing of vows, thus barring the entrance to fresh victims. But how would they have hastened to open the gates for the sad inhabitants of the cloisters, had they known the desperate state of misery to which they had been reduced ! I have said in another book\* how every kind of cultivation and intellectual amusement had been gradually withdrawn from the poor nuns, how the distrust of the clergy had deprived them of food for the mind. They were literally dying, without a breath of anything vital ; the absence of religion was also as great as that of worldly things, perhaps even greater. Death, *ennui*, vacancy ; nothing to-day ; nothing to-morrow ; nothing in the morning, and nothing in the evening ; only a confessor occasionally, and a little immorality. Or else they ran violently into the opposite extreme, from the cloister to Voltaire or Rousseau, into absolute Revolution. I have known many nuns who were very incredulous. A few had a faith of their own ; and theirs was so powerful that they could have walked through fire. Witness Charlotte Corday, nourished in the cloister, with the precepts of Plutarch and Rousseau, beneath the vaulted roof of Matilda and William the Conqueror.†

It was like a review of all the unfortunate ; all the phantoms

\* "*Priests, Women, and Families*," *passim*.

† At the Abbaye-aux-Dames at Caen.—See her Biography, by Paul Delasalle, Louis Dubois, &c.

of the middle ages reappeared in their turn before the face of the clergy, the universal oppressor. The Jews came. After having been annually smitten on the cheek at Toulouse, or hung between two dogs, they came modestly to ask whether they were men. These ancestors of Christianity, so harshly treated by their own sons, were also, in one sense, the ancestors of the French Revolution ; the latter, as a reaction of Right, would necessarily bow down before that austere law, wherein Moses foresaw the future triumph of Right.

Another victim of religious prejudices, the poor community of comedians, came also to claim their rights. O barbarous prejudices ! The two first men of England and France, the author of *Othello* and the author of *Tartufe*, were they not comedians ? And was not the great man who spoke for them in the National Assembly, even Mirabeau, a sublime comedian ? “ Action, action, action ! ” is what makes the orator, said Demosthenes.

The Assembly decided nothing for the comedians, and nothing for the Jews. On the account of the latter, they granted to *non-catholics* access to civil employments. They also recalled from foreign countries our unfortunate brethren, the Protestants, driven away by the barbarous agents of Louis XIV., and promised to restore to them their property, as far as they were able. Several returned, after an exile of a century ; but few recovered their fortune. This innocent and unjustly banished population did not find an indemnity of a milliard of francs (400,000*l.*), a sum so lavishly squandered on the guilty emigrants.\*

What they found was equality, the most honourable rehabilitation, France restored to justice, and raised from the dead, and men of their belief in the foremost rank of the Assembly, Rabaut and Barnave at the tribune. Too just retribution ! These two illustrious Protestants were members of the ecclesiastical committee, and were now judging their ancient judges, and deciding on the fate of those who banished, burnt, and broke their fathers on the wheel. By way of vengeance, they

\* We must, however, make a distinction. There is the emigrant who goes to side with the enemy ; and the emigrant, more than excusable, who departs through fear.

proposed to vote one hundred and thirty-three millions for the Catholic clergy !

Rabaut Saint-Etienne was, as is well known, the son of the old doctor, the persevering apostle and glorious martyr of Cévennes, who for fifty years knew no other roof than leaves and the canopy of heaven, hunted like a bandit, passing the winters on the snow among wolves, without any other weapon than his pen, with which he wrote his sermons in the woods. His son, after working many years at the task of religious liberty, had the happiness of voting it. It was he also who proposed and proclaimed the *unity* and *indivisibility* of France (August 9, 1791). A noble proposition, which all doubtless would have made, but which was to spring first from the heart of our Protestants, so long and so cruelly divorced from their native land. The Assembly raised Rabaut to the dignity of president, and he had the glorious happiness of writing to his venerable parent these words of solemn rehabilitation and honour for the proscribed : “ The President of the National Assembly is at your feet.”

### CHAPTER III.

#### RESISTANCE.—THE CLERGY.—THE PARLIAMENTS.—THE PROVINCIAL STATES.

The Clergy make an Appeal to Civil War, October 14th.—Enthusiast! Transport of the Towns of Brittany.—The Assembly reduces the Number of Primary Electors to four Millions and a half.—The Assembly annuls the Clergy, as a body, and also the Parliaments, November 3rd.—Resistance of the Tribunals.—Fatal Part played by the Parliaments in latter Ages.—They no longer admitted any but Nobles.—The Parliaments of Rouen and Metz offer Resistance, November, 1789.

THE discussion on ecclesiastical estates began on the 8th of October ; and on the 14th, the clergy raised the shout of civil war.

On the 14th, it was a bishop of Brittany ; on the 24th, the clergy of the diocese of Toulouse : a tocsin in the west, and a tocsin in the south.

We must not forget that in this same month of October, the prelates and rich *abbés* of Belgium, whose estates were also in

danger, were creating an army and appointing a general. Brabant and Flanders unfurled the banner of the blood-red cross. The Capuchin friars, and other monks, were exciting the peasantry, intoxicating them with savage sermons and furious processions, and forcing upon them swords and daggers against the Emperor. Our peasantry were less prompt in making the movement. Their judgment in general is healthy, and far more clear and sober than that of the Belgians. The old frolicsome spirit of the *fabliaux*\* and of Rabelais, but little favourable to the clergy, is never entirely extinct in France. "*Monsieur le curé*, and his housekeeper," is ever an inexhaustible text of scandal for the long winter's evenings. The curate, however, was rather lampooned than hated; but the bishops (all nobles at that time, Louis XVI. would elect no others) were, for the most part, far more scandalous. Without confining their amours to their provincial countesses, who used to do the honours of the episcopal palace, they had intrigues also with the actresses of Paris. These countesses, or marchionesses, mostly of the poorer ranks of the nobility, occasionally honoured their half-marriages by their real merit; more than one governed the bishopric, and better than the bishop could have done it. One of these women, not far from Paris, made in her diocese the elections of 1789, and strove energetically to send two excellent deputies to the National Assembly.

✓ An episcopacy so worldly, that remembered its religion only as soon as its estates were about to be touched, had really a difficult task in attempting to renew the ancient spirit of fanaticism in the rural districts. Even in Brittany, where the peasantry always belong to the priests, it was an imprudent blunder of the bishop of Tréguier to fling abroad the manifesto of civil war on the 14th of October; he fired too soon; and his gun missed fire. In his incendiary mandate he declared the king was a prisoner, and religion overthrown; that the priests would be nothing better than *clerks paid by brigands*—that is to say, the nation, the National Assembly. To be able to say such things on the 14th, it would have been necessary to be ready to make a civil war on the morrow. Indeed, a few giddy

\* Satirical Poems.

young nobles, made an attempt to excite the peasantry. But the peasant of Brittany, so resolute when once on the road and bent on proceeding, is slow in making the first move; he found it difficult to understand that the question of church lands, though doubtless very serious, comprised all religion. Whilst the peasant was ruminating, and studying this knotty point, the town did not wait to reflect, but acted, and with terrible vigour, without consulting anybody. All the municipalities in the diocese invaded Tréguier, and proceeded without losing a day, against the bishop and the noble instigators; interrogated them, and took down the depositions of witnesses against them. The intimidation was so great, that the prelate and the others denied everything, assuring that they had neither said nor done anything to excite the country people to rebel. The municipalities sent the whole of the proceedings thus begun to the National Assembly, to the Keeper of the Seals; but, without waiting for the judgment, they pronounced at once a provisional sentence: "Whoever enlists for the nobles is a traitor to the communes; and the nobles themselves are *unworthy the safe-guard of the nation*, if they attempt to obtain a grade in the national guard."\*

The mandate came out on the 14th; and this violent retaliation took place on the 18th (at latest). During the week the sword was drawn. Brest having purchased some corn for provision, some of the peasantry were paid and urged to stop the corn-waggons, and the envoys of Brest, at Lannion; they were in imminent danger of their lives, and obliged to sign a shameful surrender. An army immediately marched forth from Brest, and from all the different towns at once. Such as were too remote, as Quimper, Lorient, and Hennebont, offered money and assistance. Brest, Morlaix, Landernau, and several others, marched in whole masses; on the road, they met all the communes arriving also in arms, and were obliged to send some of them back again. The wonder is that no violence was committed. This general mustering, rising like a storm along the whole country, arrived at the heights above Lannion, and there halted. The heroic manhood of Brittany was never more conspicuously displayed; she was firm against

\* Bailly, iii., 209. Duchatellier gives but little information in this matter.



herself. They merely took back the purchased corn, and handed the guilty parties over to the judges, that is to say, their friends.

What rendered the privileged classes so easy to be conquered at that period, was that they did not act in concert. Several made an appeal to physical force at once ; but the greater number did not despair of resisting by the law, by the old, and perhaps by the new, system.

The parliaments had not yet acted. It was their vacation, They intended to act on their return to business in November.

The majority of the nobles and upper clergy did not yet act. They still entertained one hope. Being the proprietors of the greater part of the land, and predominant in the rural districts, they held in their dependency a whole race of servants and clients under different denominations. These country people being called to vote by Necker's universal election in the spring of 1789, had generally voted properly, because their patrons, for the most part, gloried in bringing about the States-general, which they considered a thing of no consequence. But ages had passed away in a year. The same patrons at the present time, the end of the year '89, would certainly make desperate efforts to get the rural population to vote against the Revolution ; they were going to make the farmer choose between his patriotism (still very young) and his daily bread, and to lead their submissive, trembling labourers, in bands, to the electoral urn, and make them vote by cudgel law. Things will presently change, when the peasant will be able to catch a glimpse of the way to acquire the church estates, and the lands of the manors, and when the Assembly will have created, by these sales, a legion of proprietors and free electors. At the present moment, however, there is nothing of the kind. The rural districts are still subject to electoral bondage : Necker's universal suffrage, if the Assembly had adopted it, would incontestibly have given the victory to the old state of affairs.

On the 22nd of October, the Assembly decreed that nobody could be an elector unless he paid in direct taxes, as proprietor or tenant, the value of three days' labour, (that is to say, three francs, at most).

With that one line, they swept away from the hands of the aristocracy a million of rural electors.

Of the five or six millions of electors produced by the universal suffrage, there remained *four millions four hundred thousand* \* proprietors or tenants.

Grégoire, Duport, Robespierre, and other worshippers of the ideal, objected, but in vain, that men were equal and ought therefore all to vote according to the dictates of natural law. Two days previously, Montlosier, the royalist, had likewise proved that all men are equal.

In the crisis in which they then were, nothing could have been more futile and fatal than this thesis of natural law. These Utopists thus bestowed a million of electors on the enemies of equality in the name of equality.

The glory of this truly revolutionary measure belongs to Thouret, the illustrious legist of Normandy, a practical Sieyès, who caused the Assembly to pass, or at least facilitated, the great measures which it then enacted. Without either eloquence or effect, he severed with the power of his logic those knotty questions with which the most intelligent, such as Sieyès and Mirabeau, seemed to be puzzled.

He alone ends the discussion on the ecclesiastical estates, by extricating it from the lower region of disputation, and boldly raising it to the light of philosophical right. All his arguments, in October and December, are summed up in this profound sentence: "How could you possess?" said he to the clergy, "*you do not exist*."

"You do not exist as a body. The moral bodies which the state creates are not bodies in the proper sense of the word, are not living beings. They have a moral ideal existence which is imparted to them by the will of the state, their creator. The state made them, and causes them to live. As useful, it maintained them; but having become noxious, it withdraws from them its will, which constitutes all their life and rational being."

To which Maury replied: "No, the state did not create us; we exist without the state." Which was equivalent to saying, We are a state within the state, a principle in opposition to a principle, a struggle, an organised warfare, permanent discord in the name of charity and union.

\* This is, at least, the number found in 1791. We shall revert to this important point.

On the 3rd of November, the Assembly decreed that the estates of the clergy *were at the disposal of the nation*. In December it further decreed, in the terms laid down by Thouret: That the clergy are no longer an order ; *that they do not exist* (as a body).

The 3rd of November is a great day. It breaks up the parliaments and even the provincial states.

On the same day appeared Thouret's report on the organisation of departments, the necessity of dividing the provinces, of removing those false nationalities, so malevolent and hostile, in order to constitute a real nation in the spirit of unity.

Who was interested in maintaining those ancient divisions, all those feelings of bitter rivalry, to keep people Gascons, Provençaux, and Britons, and to prevent Frenchmen from being one France? Those who reigned in the provinces, the parliaments, and the provincial states; those false phantoms of liberty which for so long a time had made it but its shadow, a snare, and even impeded its birth.

Well then, on the 3rd of November, at the moment when it gives the first blow to the provincial states, the Assembly adjourns the parliaments for an indefinite period. Lameth made the proposal, and Thouret drew up the decree. "We have buried them alive," said Lameth on leaving the Assembly.

All the ancient magistracy had sufficiently proved what the Revolution had to expect from it. The tribunals of Alsace, Beaujolais, and Corsica, the prevosts of Champaign and Provence, took upon themselves to choose between the different laws ; they were perfectly acquainted with such as favoured the king, but did not know the others. On the 27th of October, the judges sent to Marseilles by the parliament of Aix acted according to the ancient forms, with secret procedures, and all the old barbarous practices, without paying any attention to the contrary decree, sanctioned on the 4th of October. The parliament of Besançon openly refused to register any decree of the Assembly.

The latter had but to say one word to annihilate this insolence. The people were trembling with indignation around those rebellious tribunals. "Against those states and parliaments," said Robespierre, "you need do nothing ; the municipalities will act sufficiently."

On the 5th of November, the Assembly raised its arms to chastise. "Such tribunals as do not register within three days shall be prosecuted for illegal behaviour.

These companies had had under the feeble government now expiring, a considerable power of making resistance, both legal and seditious. The whimsical mixture of functions which they comprised gave them abundant means of doing so.—Their sovereign, absolute, hereditary *jurisdiction*, which never forgot an injury, was dreaded by all; even ministers and great lords durst never exasperate judges who would remember the circumstance, perhaps fifty years afterwards, in some trial or other to ruin their families.—Their *refusal to register*, which gave them a kind of *veto* against the king, had at least the effect of affording a signal to sedition, and, in an indirect manner, of proclaiming it legal.—Their *administrative* usurpations, the superintendence of provisions in which they interfered, afforded them a thousand opportunities of causing a terrible accusation to impend over people in power.—Lastly, a part of the *police* was in their hands; that is to say, that they were charged to repress on one hand the troubles they excited on the other.

Was this dangerous power at least in safe hands that might warrant security? The parliament men in the eighteenth century had been seriously corrupted by their intercourse with the nobility. Even those among them who, as Jansenists, were hostile to the court, devout, austere, and factious, were, in spite of their surly haughtiness, not the less flattered to behold the duke or prince such a one in their antechamber. The great lords, who laughed at them in secret, courted and flattered them, and spoke subserviently to them in order to gain unjust law-suits, especially to be able to usurp the lands of the commons with impunity. The meanness to which the courtiers stooped before those big wigs, involved them no further. They themselves would laugh at it; occasionally, they condescended to marry their daughters,—their fortunes, in order to replenish their own. The younger of the parliamentarians, too much flattered by this acquaintance and these alliances with personages of higher rank, strove hard to imitate them—to be, after their example, good-natured profligates, and, like awkward imitators, they outstepped their masters. They

would lay aside their red robes, and descend from the *fleurs-de-lis* to frequent houses of a lower order, fashionable suppers, and to take part in private theatricals.

O Justice, how low hast thou fallen! . . . O degrading history! In the middle ages it was material, in the land and in the race, in the fief and in the blood. The lord, or he who succeeds all others, the lord of lords, the king, would say: "Justice is mine; I can judge or cause to be judged." By whom? "No matter by whom; by any one of my lieutenants, by my servant, my steward, my porter . . . Come here; I am pleased with you and give you a magistracy." This man says, to the same purpose: "I shall not be a judge myself, I shall sell this magistracy."—Then comes the son of a merchant, who purchases, to sell a second time, this most holy of sacred things; thus justice passes from hand to hand, like a parcel of goods, nay, passes into a heritage, a dowry . . . A strange jointure for a young bride, the right of hanging and breaking a man on the wheel!

Hereditary right, venality, privilege, exception,—such were the names of justice. And yet how otherwise should we term injustice?—Privileges of *persons*, judged by whom they chose. Privilege of *time*: I judge thee, at my good pleasure, to-morrow, in ten years, or never.—And privilege of *place*. The parliament will summon from the distance of a hundred and fifty leagues or more some poor fellow who is pleading against his lord. I advise him to be resigned and give up his cause; let him abandon it altogether rather than come and waste years perhaps at Paris, in dirt and poverty, in soliciting a decree from the good friends of his lord.

The parliaments of latter years had provided, by decrees, not promulgated, but avowed and faithfully executed, that none but men of noble birth or newly-made nobles could any longer be admitted among them.

Thence arose a deplorable decline of capacity. The study of the law, debased in the schools,\* weakened among the lawyers,

\* The venerable M. Berriat Saint-Prix has often related to me some singular facts relating to this matter. Ignorance and routine were becoming the character of the tribunals more and more every day. On their systematic opposition to d'Aguesseau's attempts to restore unity to the law, see M. La Ferrière's fine *Histoire du Droit Français*.



was altogether wanting among the magistrates,—those very men who applied the law for life or death. The companies very seldom required the candidate to give proofs of his science, if he proved his titles of nobility.

Thence also proceeded a line of conduct more and more false and ambiguous. Those noble magistrates are constantly advancing and retreating. They shout for liberty; Turgot becomes minister, and then they reject him. They raise a cry of States-General! But on the day they are given to them, they propose to render them null by fashioning them in the likeness of the old powerless States.

On that day they expired.

When the Assembly decreed an indefinite vacation, they had little expected such a blow. Those of Paris wanted to resist;\* but the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Keeper of the Seals, entreated them not to do so. November would have renewed the great October movement. They registered and made the somewhat dilatory offer to give judgment gratuitously.

Those of Rouen also enregistered; but they wrote secretly and prudently to the king, that they did so provisionally, and from motives of obedience to him. Those of Metz said as much, publicly and boldly, in a general meeting of all the chambers, grounding resolutely this act on the *non-liberty* of the king. Those men were able to swagger, being protected by Bouillé's artillery.

The timid Bishop, the Keeper of the Seals, was sore afraid. He pointed out the danger to the king: how the Assembly would retaliate, in anger, and let loose the people. The way to save the parliaments, was for the king to hasten to condemn them himself. He would be in a better position to interfere and intercede. Indeed, the cities of Rouen and Metz were already impeaching their parliaments and demanding their punishment. Those proud bodies saw themselves alone, with the whole population against them: they retracted. Metz itself interceded for its guilty parliament; and the Assembly pardoned it (November 25th, 1789).

\* See Sallier, the Parliamentarian, *Annales*, ii., p. 49.



## CHAPTER IV.

RESISTANCE.—PARLIAMENTS.—MOVEMENT OF THE  
CONFEDERATIONS.

Labours of the Judiciary Organisation.—The Parliament of Brittany at the Bar of the Assembly, January 8, 1790.—The Parliaments of Brittany and Bordeaux condemned, January, March.—Origin of the Confederations: Anjou, Brittany, Dauphiné, Franche-Comté, Rhone, Burgundy, Languedoc, Provence, &c.—War against the Châteaux repressed; the Cities defend the Nobles, their Enemies, February, 1790.

THE most obstinate resistance was that of the parliament of Brittany. Three several times it refused to register, and thought itself able to maintain its refusal. On one hand, it had the nobility, who were mustering at Saint-Malo, the numerous and very faithful servants of the nobles, its own members and clients in the towns, its friends in the religious establishments (*confréries*), and the corporations of trades; add, moreover, the facility of obtaining recruits in that multitude of workmen out of employ, and people wandering about the streets, dying of hunger. The towns beheld them busily engaged in preparing a civil war. Surrounded as they were by hostile or doubtful rural districts, they might be reduced to famine; they therefore resolved to settle the question at once. Rennes and Nantes, Vannes and Saint Malo, sent overwhelming accusations to the Assembly, declaring that they abjured all connection with the traitors. Without waiting for orders, the national guard of Rennes entered the castle and secured the cannon (December 18, 1789).

The Assembly took two measures. It summoned the parliament of Brittany to its bar; and it gave a favourable reception to the petition of Rennes soliciting the creation of other tribunals. It began its grand work, the organisation of a system of justice worthy of the name, neither paid, purchased, nor hereditary, but sprung from the people and for the people. The first article of such an organisation was, of course, the suppression of the parliaments (December 22, 1789).

Thouret, the author of the report, well laid down this maxim, sadly overlooked since then, that a revolution that wishes to be durable ought, before everything else, to deprive its enemies of the sword of justice.

It is a strange contradiction to say to the system overthrown: "Thy principle is adverse to me; I blot it out of the laws and government; but in all private matters, thou shalt apply it against me." How was it possible thus to disown the quiet, calm, but terrible omnipotence of the judicial power, which must inevitably absorb it. Every other power is in need of it; but it can do without the others. Give me but the judicial power, and keep your laws and ordinances, all that mountain-heap of paper; and I will undertake to establish triumphantly the system the most opposite to your laws. Those old parliamentary tyrants were obliged, in spite of themselves, to come and bow down to the National Assembly (January 8th). If they had not come by fair means, Brittany would even have raised an army on purpose to drag them thither. They appeared with an arrogant air and an ill-disguised contempt for that Assembly of lawyers, for whom they cared almost as little as they did in days of yore, when, with a lofty demeanour, they overwhelmed the bar with their severe lectures. But now the tables were turned. Besides, what did it matter who were the persons? It was to reason that they were to reply, in presence of principles now laid down for the first time.

Their haughtiness entirely disappeared, and they remained, as it were, nailed to the ground, when, from that Assembly of advocates, they listened to the following words: "You say Brittany is not represented: and yet she has, in this Assembly, sixty-six representatives. It is not in antiquated charters, in which cunning, combined with power, found means to oppress the people, that you must look for the rights of the nation; it is in Reason; its rights are as ancient as time, and as sacred as nature."

The president of the parliament of Brittany had not defended the parliament which formed the matter of debate. He defended Brittany, which neither wished nor needed to be defended.

He alleged the clauses of the marriage of Anne of Brittany, a marriage that was no better than a divorce organised and stipulated for by Brittany and France. He pleaded for this

divorce, as a right that was to be eternal. A hateful insidious defence, addressed not to the Assembly, but to provincial pride, — a provocation exciting civil war.

Had Brittany to fear she would become less by becoming France? Was it possible that such a separation should last for ever? Was it not necessary that a more real alliance should be sooner or later effected? Brittany has gained enough in sharing the glory of so great an empire; and certainly this empire has also gained, we must frankly confess, in espousing that poor yet glorious country, its bride of granite, that mother of noble hearts and vigorous resistance.

Thus the defence of the parliaments, being untenable, subsided into a defence of provinces and provincial states. But these states found themselves still weaker in one respect. The parliaments were homogeneous organised bodies; but the states were nothing better than monstrous and barbarous constructions, heterogeneous and discordant. The best to be said in their favour was that a few of them, those of Languedoc, for instance, had administered injustice wisely and prudently. Others, those of Dauphiné, under the able direction of Mounier, had made a noble beginning on the eve of the Revolution.

This same Mounier, a fugitive, and belonging to the reaction-party, had abused his influence over Dauphiné to fix an early convocation of the states, "in which they would examine whether the king were really free." At Toulouse one or two hundred nobles and parliamentarians had made a show of assembling the states. Those of Cambresis, an imperceptible assembly in an imperceptible country, which termed themselves states, had also claimed their privilege of not being France, and said, like those of Brittany, "We are a nation."

The false and faithless representatives of these provinces came boldly and spoke in their name; but they were violently contradicted at the very same moment. The municipalities, roused into life, and full of vigour and energy, came one after the other before the National Assembly to say to those States and Parliaments: "Speak not in the name of the people; the people do not know you; you represent only yourselves, — venality, hereditary right, and Gothic privilege."

The municipality, a real living body (this we perceive from the violence of its blows), used towards those old artificial bodies,

those ancient barbarous ruins, the equivalent of the language already expressed to the body of the clergy : “ You do not exist ! ”

They appeared pitiable to the Assembly. All it did to those of Brittany was to declare them incapable of doing what they refused to do,—to interdict them from all public functions, until they had presented a request for leave to take the oath (January 11th).

The same indulgence was granted, two months later, to the parliament of Bordeaux, which, taking advantage of the troubles in the south, ventured so far as to make a kind of suit against the Revolution, declaring, in a public document, that it had done nothing but mischief, and insolently terming the Assembly *the deputies of the bailiwicks*.

The Assembly had but little occasion to act with severity : this was more than sufficiently carried out by the people. Brittany quelled her parliament, and that of Bordeaux was accused before the Assembly by the very city of Bordeaux which sent the ardent and youthful Fonfrède expressly to support the accusation (March 4th).

These attempts at resistance became quite insignificant amid the immense popular movement manifested on all sides. Never, since the Crusades, had there been so general and deep a commotion among all classes of the people. In 1790 it was the enthusiasm of fraternity ; about to become the enthusiasm of war.

Where did this enthusiasm first begin ? Everywhere. No precise origin can be assigned to these great spontaneous facts.

In the summer of 1789, from the general dread of *brigands*, solitary habitations, and even the hamlets felt alarmed at their isolated position : one hamlet united with another, their villages with villages, and even the town with the country. Confederation, mutual assistance, brotherly friendship, fraternity,—such was the idea, the title of their covenants. Few, very few are yet written.

The idea of fraternity is at first rather limited. It implies only the neighbours, or at most the province. The great confederation of Brittany and Anjou has still this provincial character. Convoked for the 26th of November, it was completed in January. At the central point of the peninsula, far

from the roads, and in the solitary little town of Pontivy the representatives of a hundred and fifty thousand national guards assembled together. Those on horseback alone wore a common uniform, a red body with black facings ; all the others, distinguished by rose, amaranth, or chamois facings, reminded one in their very union, of the diversity of the towns that deputed them. In their covenant of union, to which they invite all the municipalities in the kingdom, they insist nevertheless on always forming a family of Brittany and Anjou, "whatever be the new division of departments, necessary for the administration." They establish a system of correspondence between their cities. In the general disorganisation and the uncertainty in which they are about the success of the new order of things, they take their measures to be at least always organised apart.

In less detached places, in districts traversed by high roads, and especially on rivers, this brotherly covenant assumes a more extensive signification. The rivers which, under the old order of things, by the vast number of tolls and interior custom-house duties, were hardly anything better than barriers, obstacles, and impediments, become under the government of liberty, the principal means of circulation, and bring men into a correspondence of ideas and sentiments as much as of commerce.

It was near the Rhone, at the petty town Etoile, two leagues from Valence, that *the province was abjured* for the first time ; fourteen rural communes of Dauphiné unite together and devote themselves to the grand unity of France (Nov. 29th, 1789),—a noble answer from these peasants to politicians like Mounier, who were making an appeal to provincial pride the spirit of dissension, and were endeavouring to arm Dauphiné against France.

This confederation, renewed at Montélimart, is no longer that of Dauphiné alone, but composed of several provinces of either bank, Dauphiné and Vivarais, Provence and Languedoc ; this time, therefore, they are *Frenchmen*.—Grenoble sends to it, of her own accord, in spite of her municipality and of politicians ; she no longer cares about her position as a capital-town ; she prefers being France.—All repeat together the sacred oath, which the peasants had already taken in November :—No more provinces ! one native-land ! and to give one another mutual



aid and provisions, passing corn from one place to another by the Rhone (December 13th).

That sacred river, flowing by so many races of men, of different nation and language, seems to hasten to exchange different products, sentiments, and ideas ; and is, in its varied course, the universal mediator, the sociable *Genius*, the bond of fellowship of the South. It was at its delightful and smiling point of junction with the Saône, that, in the reign of Augustus, sixty nations of the Gauls had raised their altar ; and it is at the sternest point, at the deep, melancholy passage commanded by the copper mountains of the Ardèche, in the Roman province of Valence, seated beneath her eternal arc, that took place, on the 31st of January, 1790, the first of our grand confederations. Ten thousand men were up in arms, who must have represented several hundreds of thousands. There were thirty thousand spectators. In presence of that immutable antiquity, those everlasting mountains, and that noble river, ever changing yet ever the same, the solemn oath was taken. The ten thousand bending one knee, and the thirty thousand kneeling, swore all together the holy unity of France.

The whole was grand ; both the time and place ; and, what is more rare, the language was by no means inferior. It was full of the wisdom of Dauphiné and the simplicity of Vivarais, the whole being animated with the breath of Languedoc and Provence. At the commencement of a career of sacrifices which they clearly foresaw, at the moment they were beginning the grand but difficult task, those excellent citizens recommended to one another to found liberty on its only solid base "virtue," on what renders devotion easy, "simplicity, sobriety, and pureness of heart."

I would also know what was said at Voute, almost opposite, on the other side of the Rhone, by the hundred thousand armed peasants who there cemented the union of the province of Vivarais. It was still the month of February, a rough season in those cold mountains ; neither weather, misery, nor the horrible roads, prevented those poor people from arriving at the place of meeting. Neither torrents, ice, precipices, nor the thawing of the snow was able to arrest their march. A new breath of life was in the air which inspired them with a glow of enthusiasm ; citizens for the first time, and summoned



from their remote snowy regions by the unknown name of liberty, they set forth, like the kings and shepherds of the East at the birth of Christ, seeing clearly in the middle of night, and following unerringly, through the wintry mists, the dawn of spring, and the star of France.

Long before this, the fourteen towns of Franche-Comté, feeling uneasy between the castles and the pillagers forcing and burning the castles, had united at Besançon and promised one another mutual assistance.

Thus, far above the riots, dangers, and fears, I hear a great and mighty word, at once sweet and formidable, one that will restrain and calm everything, Fraternity, gradually rising and re-echoed by those imposing assemblies, each of which is a great people.

And in proportion as these associations are formed, they associate also one with another: like those great farandoles of the South, where each new company of dancers join hands with another, and the same dance transports whole populations.

At the same period, the noble heart of Burgundy displayed itself by two early illustrious examples.

In the very depth of winter, and during the general scarcity, Dijon calls upon all the municipalities of Burgundy to hasten to the assistance of starving Lyons.\*

Lyons was starving, and Dijon grieves. Thus these words fraternity and national bond of fellowship, are not words only, but sincere sentiments, real and efficacious actions.

The same city of Dijon, joined to the confederations of Dauphiné and Vivarais (themselves united to those of Provence and Languedoc) invites Burgundy to give her hand to the cities of Franche-Comté. Thus, the immense farandole of the south-east, joining and ever forming new links, advances as far as Dijon, which is connected with Paris.

All emerging from egotism, all wishing to do good to all and to feed one another, provisions begin to circulate easily, and plenty is again restored; it seemed as though, by some miracle of fraternity, a new harvest had been made in the dead of winter.

In all this, there is not a vestige of that spirit of exclusion

\* Archives of Dijon. I owe this communication to the obliging service of M. Garnier.

and local isolation later designated by the name of federalism. On the contrary, there is here a covenant sworn for the unity of France. These confederations of provinces look all towards the centre ; all invoke, join, and devote themselves to the National Assembly, that is to say, to unity. They all thank Paris for its brotherly summons ; one town demands its assistance, another to be affiliated to its national guard. Clermont had proposed to it in November a general association of municipalities. At that period, indeed, threatened by the States, the Parliaments, and the Clergy, the rural districts being doubtful, all the safety of France seemed to depend on a close union of the cities. Thank heaven, the great confederations gave a happier solution to this difficulty.

In their movement they transported, with the towns, an immense number of the rural population. This has been seen in the case of Dauphiné, Vivarais, and Languedoc.

In Brittany, Quercy, Rouergue, Limousin, and Perigord, the country places are less peaceful ; in February there were several disturbances and acts of violence. The beggars, supported till then with great difficulty by the municipalities, gradually spread abroad over the whole country. The peasants begin again to force the castles, burn the feudal charters, and execute by main force the declarations of the 4th of August, the promises of the Assembly. Whilst the latter is ruminating, terror reigns in the rural districts. The nobles forsake their castles and remove to town to conceal themselves and seek safety among their enemies. And those enemies defend them. The national guards of Brittany, who have just sworn their league against the nobles, now arm in their favour, and go to defend those manors where they were conspiring against them.\* Those of Quercy and the South in general were equally magnanimous.

\* The National Guards of 1790 were by no means an aristocracy, as some writers, by a strange anachronism, have given us to understand. In most of the towns, they were, as I have said, literally *everybody*. All were interested in preventing the devastation of the rural districts, which would have rendered cultivation impossible, and famished France. Besides, those transient disturbances had by no means the character of a *Jacquerie*. In certain neighbourhoods of Brittany and Provence, the peasants themselves repaired the damage that had been committed. In a castle where they found only a sick lady with her children, they abstained from every kind of disturbance, &c.

The pillagers were checked, the peasantry kept in order, and gradually initiated and interested in the march of the Revolution. To whom, indeed, could it be more profitable than to them? It had delivered from tithes such of them as were proprietors; and among the rest it was going to create proprietors by hundreds and thousands. It was about to honour them with the sword, to raise them in one day from serfs to nobles, to conduct them throughout the earth to glory and adventures, and to create from them princes and kings,—nay, more, heroes!

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## CHAPTER V.

### RESISTANCE.—THE QUEEN AND AUSTRIA (OCTOBER TO FEBRUARY.)

Irritation of the Queen, October.—Plottings of the Court.—The King the Prisoner of the People (November—December?)—The Queen distrusts the Princes.—The Queen but little allied with the Clergy.—She had always been governed by Austria.—Austria interested that the King should not act.—Louis XVI. and Leopold declare themselves friendly to Constitutions, February and March.—Trial of Besenval and Favras.—Death of Favras, February 18th.—Discouragement of the Royalists.—Great Confederations of the North.

FROM the sublime spectacle of fraternity, I fall, alas! to the earth, among intrigues and plots.

Nobody appreciated the immensity of the movement; nobody fathomed that rapid and invincible tide rising from October to July. Whole populations, till then unknown to one another, met and united. Distant towns and provinces, which even lately were still divided by an ancient spirit of rivalry, marched forth, as it were, to meet one another, embraced and fraternised. This novel and striking fact was scarcely remarked by the great thinkers of the age. If it had been possible for it to be noticed by the queen and the Court, it would have discouraged all useless opposition. For who, whilst the ocean is rising, would dare to march against it?

The queen deceived herself at the very outset; and she remained mistaken. She looked upon the 6th of October as an affair prepared by the Duke of Orleans, a trick played

against her by the enemy. She yielded ; but, before her departure, she conjured the king, in the name of his son, to go to Paris only to wait for an opportunity to escape.\*

On the very first day, the Mayor of Paris, on entreating him to fix his residence there, and telling him that the centre of the empire was the natural abode of the kings, obtained from him only this answer : " That he would willingly make Paris his *most habitual* residence."

On the 9th appeared the king's proclamation, in which he announced that if he had not been in Paris, *he should have been afraid of causing a great disturbance*; that, the constitution being made, he would realise his project of going *to visit his provinces* ; that he indulged in the hope of receiving from them proofs of their affection, of seeing them *encourage the National Assembly, &c.*

This ambiguous letter, which seemed to provoke Royalist addresses, decided the commune of Paris to write also to the provinces ; it desired to comfort them, it said, against certain insinuations, *casting a veil over the plot* which had nearly overthrown the new order of things ; and it *offered a sincere fraternal alliance* to all the communes in the kingdom.

The queen refused to receive the conquerors of the Bastille, who had come to present to her their homage. She gave an audience to the market-women (*dames de la Halle*), but at a distance, and as though separated and defended by the wide baskets of the ladies of the court, who placed themselves before her. By thus acting, she estranged from her a very royalist class ; several of the market-women disavowed the 6th of October ; and themselves arrested some female vagrants who were entering houses to extort money.

These sad mistakes committed by the queen were not calculated to increase confidence. And how indeed could it have existed amid the attempts of the Court, ever miscarrying and always discovered ? Between October and March, a plot was discovered nearly every month (those of Augéard, Favras, Maillebois, &c.)

On the 25th of October, Augéard, the queen's keeper of the seals, was arrested, and at his house was found a plan to conduct the king to Metz.

\* Beaulieu, ii., 203.

On the 21st of November, in the Assembly, the committee of inquiry, provoked by Malouet, silences the latter by telling him there exists a new plot to carry off the king to Metz, and that he, Malouet, is perfectly well acquainted with it.

On the 25th of December, they arrest the Marquis de Favras, another agent for carrying off the king, who was recruiting partisans in Paris. If their object had been to trouble the minds of the people for ever, and drive them mad with distrust and fear, thus involving them in dark plottings and snares, they had but to do what they did : to show them, by a series of awkward conspiracies, the king absconding every instant, putting himself at the head of the armies, and returning to take Paris by famine.

Doubtless, supposing liberty to have been firmly established, and the opposition less vigorous, it would have been better to have allowed the king and the queen to escape, to have conducted them to their proper place,—the frontier, and made a present of them to Austria.

But, in the fluctuating and uncertain state in which our poor country then was, having for her director an assembly of metaphysicians, and against her men of execution and vigour, like M. de Bouillé, our naval officers, and the nobles of Brittany, it was very difficult to part with so great an hostage as the king, and thus bestow on all those powers that unity of which they were in want.

Therefore, the people kept watch night and day, prowling around the Tuileries, and trusting to nobody. They went every morning to see whether the king had not departed ; and they held the national guard and its commander responsible for his presence. A thousand reports were in circulation, copied by violent furious newspapers, which were denouncing plots at a venture. The moderate party felt indignant, denied, and would not believe them. . . And yet the plot was not the less discovered the next day. The result of all this was that the king, who was by no means a prisoner in October, was so in November or December.

The queen had overlooked one admirable irreparable opportunity,—the moment when Lafayette and Mirabeau were united in her favour (the end of October).

She was unwilling to be saved by the Revolution, or men such



as Mirabeau and Lafayette ; this true princess of the house of Lorraine, courageous and rancorous, desired to conquer and be revenged.

She risked everything inconsiderately, evidently thinking, that after all, as Henrietta of England said in a tempest, queens could not be drowned.

Maria-Theresa had been on the point of perishing, and yet had not perished. This heroic remembrance of the mother had much influence over the daughter, though without reason ; the mother had the people on her side, and the daughter had them against her.

Lafayette, though but little inclined to be a royalist before the 6th of October, had become so sincerely ever since. He had saved the queen and protected the king. Such actions form attachments. The prodigious efforts he was obliged to make for the maintenance of order, caused him to desire earnestly that the kingly power should resume its strength ; and he wrote twice to M. de Bouillé, intreating him to unite with him for the safety of royalty. M. de Bouillé, in his memoirs, bitterly regrets his not having listened to him.

Lafayette had performed a service agreeable to the queen, by driving away the Duke of Orleans. He seemed to be acting the part of a courtier. It is curious to behold the general, the man of business, following the queen to the churches, and attending the service when she performed her Easter devotions.\* For the sake of the queen and the king, Lafayette overcame the repugnance he felt for Mirabeau.

As early as the 15th of October, Mirabeau had offered his services, by a note, which his friend Lamarek, the queen's attendant, did not show even to the king. On the 20th came another note from Mirabeau ; but this one was sent to Lafayette, who had a conversation with the orator, and conducted him to the house of the minister Montmorin.

This unexpected succour, though a god-send, was very badly received. Mirabeau would have wished the king to be satisfied with a million (of francs) for his whole expenditure ; to withdraw, not to the army at Metz, but to Rouen, and thence

\* By so doing, Lafayette wanted, I think, to pay also his court to his devout and virtuous wife. He hastened to write and tell her this important event.



publish ordinances more popular than the decrees of the Assembly.\* Thus there would be no civil war, the king making himself more revolutionary than the Revolution itself.

A strange project, proving the confidence and easy credulity of genius! If the Court had accepted it for a day, if it had consented to act this borrowed part, it would have been to hang Mirabeau on the morrow.

He might have seen very plainly, as far back as November, what he had to expect from those whom he wished to save. He wanted to be minister, and to keep at the same time his predominant position in the National Assembly. For this purpose, he desired the Court to contrive to secure for him the support and connivance, or at least the silence, of the royalist deputies; but, so far from doing so, the Keeper of the Seals warned and animated several deputies, even in the opposition, against the project. In the ministry, and at the Jacobins (this club was scarcely open), they strove at the same time to disqualify Mirabeau for the ministry. Two upright men, Montlosier on the right side of the Assembly, and Lanjuinais on the left, spoke to the same effect. They proposed, and caused it to be decreed, "that no deputy, on duty, nor for three years afterwards, could accept any place in the government." Thus the Royalists succeeded in debarring from the ministry the great orator, who would have been the support of their party (November 7th).

The queen, as we have said, was unwilling to be saved by the Revolution, neither would she be so by the princes and the emigrant party. She had been too well acquainted with the Count d'Artois† not to know that he was of very little value; and she very properly distrusted Monsieur‡ as a person of a false and uncertain character.

What then were her hopes, her views, and her secret counsellors?

We must not reckon Madame de Lamballe§, a pretty, little,

\* See the documents quoted in the *Histoire*, by M. Droz, and in the *Mémoires de Mirabeau*.

† Afterwards Charles X.—C. C.

‡ Afterwards Louis XVIII.—C. C.

§ Pretty is the proper expression; nothing could be farther from beauty: very small features, a very low forehead, and very little brain. Her hands

insignificant woman, and a dear friend of the queen's, but devoid of ideas and conversation, and little deserving the terrible responsibility laid to her charge. She seemed to form a centre, doing gracefully the honours of the queen's private saloon, on the ground floor of the Pavilion of Flora (at the Tuileries). Many of the nobility would go there; an indiscreet, frivolous, inconsiderate race, who thought, as in the time of the Fronde, to gain the day by satirical verses, witticisms, and lampoons. There, they would read a very witty newspaper, called the *Acts of the Apostles*, and sing ditties about the king's captivity, which made everybody weep, both friends and enemies.

The connections of Marie-Antoinette were entirely with the nobles, very little with the priests. She was no more a bigot than her brother Joseph II.

The nobles were not a party; they were a numerous, divided, and disconnected class; but the priests were a party, a very close, and materially a very powerful body. The transient dissension between the curates and the prelates made it appear weak; but the power of the hierarchical system, the party spirit, the Pope, the voice of the Holy-See, would presently restore the unity of the clergy. Then, from its inferior members, it was about to derive incalculable powers in the land, and in the men of the land, the inhabitants of the rural districts; it was about to bring against the people of the Revolution a whole nation,—Vendée against France.

Marie-Antoinette saw nothing of all this. These great moral powers were to her a dead letter. She was meditating victory, physical force, Bouillé and Austria.

When the papers of Louis XVI. were found on the 10th of August in the iron chest, people read with astonishment that, during the first years of his marriage, he had looked upon his youthful bride as a mere agent of Austria.\*

Having been married by M. de Choiseul, against his will,

were rather large, says Madame de Genlis. The portrait at Versailles shows very plainly her extraction and her country; she was a nice little Savoyard. Her hair, concealed by powder, was luxuriant and admirable. (Alas! this appeared but too plainly!)

\* He caused her correspondence with Vienna to be watched by Thugut, in whom she confided.—Letter dated October 17th, 1774, quoted by Brissot, *Mémoires*, iv., 120.

into that twice hostile house of Lorraine and Austria, and, obliged to receive into his palace the abbé de Vermond, spy of Maria-Theresa, he persevered so long in his distrust as to remain nineteen years without speaking to this Vermond.

It is well known how the pious empress had distributed among her numerous family their several parts, employing her daughters especially as the agents of her policy. By Caroline, she governed Naples; and by Marie-Antoinette she expected to govern France. The latter, a true Lorraine-Austrian, persecuted Louis XVI. to oblige him to give the ministry to Choiseul, himself a Lorraine and the friend of the empress. She succeeded at least in making him accept Breteuil, who, like Choiseul, had been at first ambassador at Vienna, and, like him again, belonged entirely to that court. It was again the same influence (Vermond's over the queen) which, at a more recent period, overcame the scruples of Louis XVI., and made him take for his prime minister an atheist, the Archbishop of Toulouse.

The death of Maria-Theresa, and the severe language of Joseph II. on his sister and Versailles, would, one would think, have rendered the latter less favourable towards Austria. Yet it was at this very time that she persuaded the king to grant the millions which Joseph II. wanted to extort from the Dutch.

In 1789 the queen had three confidants,—three advisers,—Vermond, ever in the Austrian interest; Breteuil, no less so; and lastly, M. Mercy d'Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador. Behind this old man, we may perceive another urging him forward,—old Prince de Kaunitz, for seventy years a minister of the Austrian monarchy; these two coxcombs, or rather these old women, who seemed to be entirely occupied with toilet and trifles, directed the queen of France.

A fatal direction, a dangerous alliance! Austria was then in so bad a situation, that, far from serving Marie-Antoinette, she could only be an obstacle to her in acting, a guide to lead to evil, and impel her towards every absurd step that the Austrian interest might require.

That Catholic and devout Austria having become half philosophical in her ideas under Joseph II., had found means to have nobody on her side. Hungary, her own sword, was turned

against her. The Belgian priests had robbed her of the Low-Countries, with the encouragement of the three Protestant powers, England, Holland, and Prussia. And what was Austria doing in the meantime? She was turning her back on Europe, marching through the deserts of the Turks, and exhausting her best armies for the advantage of Russia.

The emperor was in no better plight than his empire. Joseph II. was consumptive; he was dying and beyond the power of remedy. He had showed, in the Belgian business, a deplorable vacillation of conduct: first furious threats of fire and sword, and barbarous executions which excited horror throughout Europe; next (on the 25th of November) a general amnesty, which nobody would accept.

Austria would have been lost if the Revolution of Belgium had found support in the Revolution of France.\*

Here in France, everybody thought that the two revolutions were about to act in concert and march forward together. The most brilliant of our journalists, Camille Desmoulins, had, without awaiting events, united in one hope these sister countries by intitling his journal *Revolutions of France and Brabant*.

The obstacle to this was that the one was a revolution made by priests, and the other by philosophers. The Belgians, however, being aware that they could not rely upon their protectors, the three Protestant powers, applied to France. Vander Noot, the champion of the clergy of the Low-Countries, the great agitator of the Catholic mob, did not scruple to write to the Assembly and the king. The letter was sent back (December 10th). Louis XVI. showed himself the true brother-in-law of the emperor.† The Assembly despised a revolution

\* Any vigorous movement, even a counter-revolutionary one, might have been prejudicial to her. If our bishops, for instance, had been aided by the king in their attempts, and obtained any advantage, their success would have encouraged the Belgian prelates who had expelled Austria. She found it expedient for the time being to turn moderate, nay, liberal, in order to gain over the Belgian *progressists*, whose moderate liberal principles were very similar to Lafayette's. If Lafayette had lent his support to those *progressists*, they would most certainly have rejected the alliance of Austria, and preferred the assistance of France. Therefore the interest of Austria was, that nothing should be done in France, either one way or the other.

† I do not think that the idea to make the Duke of Orleans King of Brabant was ever seriously entertained at the Tuileries, as some writers have

made by abbés. The Tuileries, entirely governed by the ambassador of Austria, succeeded in lulling the honest Lafayette (and he the Assembly) into security.

The queen's agent, Lamarck, departed in December to offer his sword to the Belgians, his countrymen, against the Austrians. He had, however, the queen's consent, and consequently the Austrian ambassador's. They had hoped that Lamarck, a nobleman of pleasing manners and fond of novelty, might serve as a mediator, and perhaps induce the Belgians, then the conquering party, to accept a middle course that would reconcile everything,—a spurious constitution under an Austrian prince. With the word constitution, they lull Lafayette into security a second time.

Lamarck, very justly treated with suspicion by the party of the Belgian priests and the aristocracy, succeeded better with those who were called *progressists*. Austria, in order to divide her enemies, was then giving out that she was a partisan of progress; and the accession of Leopold, the philanthropic reformer, much contributed to give credit to this falsehood (February 20th). In her indirect participation in all this, the queen did herself much harm. She ought to have allied herself  
✓ more and more closely with the clergy. Austria, in her struggle with the clergy, had interests diametrically opposite.

Apparently, she hoped that, if the Emperor, coming to terms with the Belgians, at length found himself free to act, she would be able to find shelter under his protection, show the Revolution a war ready to break out against France, and perhaps strengthen Bouillé's little army with a few Austrian troops.

This was a wrong calculation. All that required much time; and there was none to spare. Austria, extremely egotistical, was a very distant and very doubtful ally.

However this may be, the two brothers-in-law pursued exactly the same line of conduct. In the same month, Louis XVI. and Leopold both declared themselves the friends of liberty, the zealous defenders of constitutions, &c.

stated. The surest way of being in the good graces of the Court was to testify much interest for the Emperor. This is also the line of conduct followed by Livarot, the commandant of Lille.—(*Correspondance inédite*, November 30th and December 13th, 1789.)



The same conduct in two situations diametrically opposite. Leopold was acting very well to recover Belgium: he was dividing his enemies and strengthening his friends. Louis XVI., on the contrary, far from strengthening his friends, was casting them, by this parade, into utter discouragement; he was paralysing the clergy, the nobility, and the counter-revolution.

Necker, Malouet, and the moderate party, believed that the king, by making an almost revolutionary constitutional profession of faith, might constitute himself the leader of the Revolution. It was thus that the counsellors of Henry III. had induced him to take the false step of calling himself the Leader of the League.

It is true the opportunity seemed favourable. The riots of January had excited much alarm on the subject of property. In presence of this great social interest, it was supposed that every political interest would appear of minor importance. The state of disorganisation was frightful; and the authority took care not to remedy it; in one place it was really extinct; in another it *pretended to be dead*, as one of the brothers Lameth used to say. Many people had had revolution enough, and more than enough; and from discouragement, would willingly have sacrificed their golden dreams for peace and unity.

At the same time (from the 1st to the 4th of February) there occurred two events of similar meaning:

First, the opening of the club of the *Impartial* (composed of Malouet, Virieu, &c.). Their impartiality consisted, as they tell us in their declaration, in *restoring power to the king*, and *preserving church property*, in submitting the alienation of the ecclesiastical estate to the will of the provinces.

On the 4th of February, the king unexpectedly presents himself before the Assembly, makes an affecting speech which fills everybody with surprise and emotion. It was incredible, marvellous! The king was secretly in love with that very constitution which stripped him of his power. He commands and admires, especially the beautiful division of the departments. Only, he advises the Assembly to postpone a part of the reforms. He deplores the disorders, and defends and consoles the clergy and the nobility; but, in short, he is, he declares, before everything else, the friend of the constitution.



He presented himself thus before the Assembly, then embarrassed about the means of restoring order, and seemed to say : You know not what to do ? Well, give me back my power.

The scene had a prodigious effect. The Assembly lost its reason. Barrère was drowned in tears. The king withdrew, and the Assembly crowded about him and escorted him back to the queen, who received the deputation, in presence of the Dauphin. Still haughty and gracious : " Here is my son," said she, " I will teach him to cherish liberty, and I hope he will be its support."

On that day she was not the daughter of Maria-Theresa, but the sister of Leopold. Shortly afterwards, her brother issued his hypocritical manifesto, in which he declared himself to be the friend of liberty and of the constitution of the Belgians ; nay, he went so far as to tell them that after all they had the right to take up arms against him, their emperor.

To return ; the Assembly seemed completely delirious, no longer knowing what it said. It arose in a mass and swore fidelity to the constitution which, as yet, did not exist. The galleries joined in those transports with inconceivable enthusiasm. Everybody began to take the oath, at the Hôtel-de-Ville, at La Grève, and in the streets. A *Te Deum* was sung ; and Paris illuminated in the evening. And, indeed, why should they not rejoice ? The Revolution is effected, and this time thoroughly.

From the 5th to the 15th of February, there was nothing but a succession of fêtes both at Paris and in the provinces. On all sides, and in every public thoroughfare, the people crowded together to take the oath. School-boys and children were led thither in procession ; and the whole country was transported with joy and enthusiasm.

Many of the friends of liberty were frightened at this movement, thinking it might turn to the king's advantage. This was a mistake. The Revolution was so powerful in its nature, and so buoyant in its spirit, that every new event, whether for or against it, ever favoured it ultimately and impelled it still faster. This affair of the oath ended in what always happens in every strong emotion. In uttering words nobody attributed

to them any other meaning than what he felt in his heart. Many a one had taken the oath to the king, who had meant nothing more than swearing fidelity to his native land.

It was remarked that at the *Té Deum*, the king had not gone to Notre-Dame; that he had not, as had been hoped, sworn at the altar. He was very willing to lie, but not to perjure himself.

On the 9th of February, whilst the fêtes still continued, Grégoire and Lanjuinais said that the cause of the riots was the non-execution of the decrees of the 4th of August; consequently, that they ought not to halt, but to proceed.

The attempts of the Royalists to restore power and military force to royal authority, were not happy. Many attempted a ruse, saying that *at least in the rural districts*, it was necessary to allow the military to act without the authorisation of the municipalities. Cazalès tried audacity, and broached the strange advice to give the king a dictatorship *for three months*;—a clumsy trick. Mirabeau, Buzot, and several others, frankly declared that the executive power was not to be trusted. The Assembly would confide in none but the municipalities, gave them full power to act, and made them responsible for such disturbances as they were able to prevent.

The extraordinary audacity of Cazalès' proposal can only be accounted for by its date (February 20th). A sanguinary sacrifice had been made on the 18th, which appeared to answer for the good faith of the court.

It had at that time two suits, two trials on its hands, those of Besenval and Favras.

Besenval, accused for the events of the 14th of July, had after all only executed the orders of his superior, the minister—the king's own commands. However, his being considered innocent would seem to condemn the taking of the Bastille and even the Revolution. He was especially odious as being a queen's man, the ex-confidant of her parties at Trianon, an old friend of Choiseul's, and, as such, belonging to the Austrian cabal.

The Court was less interested about Favras. He was an agent of Monsieur; and had undertaken, in his name, to carry off the king. Monsieur, probably, was to have been lieutenant-general, perhaps regent, if the king had been suspended, as

some of the Parliamentarians and friends of the princes had proposed. Lafayette says in his memoirs, that Favras was to have begun by killing Bailly and Lafayette.

On Favras being arrested in the night of the 25th of December, Monsieur, much alarmed, took the singular step of going to justify himself—(where do you suppose? Before what tribunal?)—before the city of Paris. The municipal magistrates were by no means qualified to receive such an act. Monsieur denied all association with Favras, said he had knowledge of the business, and made a hypocritical parade of revolutionary sentiments and his love of liberty.

Favras displayed much courage, and ennobled his life by his death. He made a very good defence, and not more than necessary, compromising nobody. He had been given to understand that it was necessary that he should die discreetly, and he did so. The long and cruel promenade to which he was condemned, the penance at Notre-Dame, &c., did not shake his resolution. At La Grève, he requested to depose once more, and was not hung until dark, by torchlight (February 18th). It was the first time a nobleman had been hung. The people testified a furious impatience, always believing that the Court would find means to save him. His papers, taken possession of by the lieutenant-civil, were (says Lafayette) given up by the daughter of this magistrate to Monsieur, on his succeeding to the throne as Louis XVIII., who burned them in great haste.

On the Sunday following the execution, the widow of Favras and her son attended in mourning at the public dinner of the king and queen. The Royalists thought they would exalt and welcome with affection the family of the victim. The queen durst not even raise her eyes.

Then they perceived the state of impotency to which the Court was reduced, and how little support they might expect who devoted their lives to its service.

As early as the 4th of February, the king's visit to the Assembly and his profession of patriotic faith had much discouraged them. The Viscount de Mirabeau withdrew in despair and broke his sword. For, indeed, what could he believe; or what could it mean? The Royalists had the alternative, either of believing the king to be a liar, a turn-coat, or a deserter from his own party. Was it true that the king was no

longer a royalist ? Or else, was he sacrificing his elergy and faithful nobility, in order to save a remnant of royalty ?

Bouillé, left without orders, and absolutely ignorant of what he had to do, then fell into the deepest despondency. Such was also the feeling of many nobles, officers of the army or navy, who then abandoned their country. Bouillé himself requested permission to do the same, and serve abroad. The king sent him word to remain, because he should want him. People had begun to hope too soon. The Revolution was finished on the 14th of July ; finished on the 6th of October ; and finished on the 4th of February ; and yet I begin to fear that in March it is not quite ended.

What matter ! Liberty, mature and powerful even in her eradle, needs not be alarmed at her antagonists. In a moment, she has just overcome the most formidable disorder and anarchy. Those pillages in the rural districts, that warfare against the castles, which, extending further and further, was threatening the whole country with one immense conflagration ; all subsides in a moment. The movement of January and February is already appeased in March. Whilst the king was presenting himself as the only guarantee of public tranquillity, and the Assembly was seeking but not finding the means of restoring it, France had created it herself. The enthusiastic transport of fraternity had outstepped the speed of legislation ; the knotty point which nobody could solve, had been settled for ever by national magnanimity. The cities all in arms, had marched forth for the defence of the chateaux, and protected the nobles, their enemies.

The great meetings continue, and become more numerous every day, so formidable, that without acting, by their mere presence, they necessarily intimidate the two enemies of France ; on one hand, anarchy and pillage, on the other the counter-revolution. They are no longer merely the more thin and scattered populations of the South that now assemble ; but the massy and compact legions of the great provinces of the north ; now it is Champaign with her hundred thousand men ; now Lorraine with her hundred thousand ; next, the Vosges, Alsace, and others. A movement full of grandeur, disinterested, and devoid of jealousy. All France is grouping, uniting, and gravitating towards union. Paris summons the provinces, and

wishes to unite to herself every commune. And the provinces wish, of their own accord, without the least particle of envy, to unite still more closely. On the 20th of March, Brittany demands that France should send to Paris one man in every thousand. Bordeaux has already demanded a civic festival for the 14th of July. These two propositions presently will make but one. France will invite all France to this grand festival, the first of the new religion.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONTINUATION.—THE QUEEN AND AUSTRIA.—THE QUEEN AND MIRABEAU.—THE ARMY (MARCH TO MAY, 1790).

Austria obtains the Alliance of Europe.—She advises the Court to gain over Mirabeau (March).—Equivocal Conduct of the Court in its Negotiation with Mirabeau.—Mirabeau lashes it again (April).—Mirabeau has little Influence in the Clubs.—Mirabeau gained over (May 10th).—Mirabeau causes the King to obtain the Initiative in making War (May 22nd).—Interview between Mirabeau and the Queen (end of May).—The Soldier fraternises with the People.—The Court tries to gain over the Soldiery.—Misery of the Ancient Army.—Insolence of the Officers.—They endeavour to set the Soldiers against the People.—Restoration of the Soldier and the Sailor.

THE conspiracy of Favras was devised by Monsieur ; that of Maillebois (discovered in March) belonged to the Count d'Artois and the emigrants. The Court, without being ignorant of these, seemed to follow rather the counsel in the memorial of Augéard, the queen's keeper of the seals : to refuse, wait, *feign confidence, and let five or six months slip away*. This same watchword was given at Vienna and at Paris.

Leopold was negotiating. He was putting the governments self-styled the friends of liberty—those spurious revolutionists (I mean England and Prussia)—to a serious trial : he was placing them opposite to the Revolution, and they were gradually unmasking. Leopold said to the English : “ Does it suit you that I should be forced to yield to France a portion of the Low Countries ? ” and England drew back ; she sacrificed, to that dread, the hope of seizing on Ostend. To the Prussians and Germans in general, he said : “ Can we abandon



our German princes established in Alsace, who are losing their feudal rights ? ” As early as the 16th of February, Prussia had already spoken in their favour, and proclaimed the right of the empire to demand satisfaction of France.

The whole of Europe belonging to either party,—on one hand Austria and Russia, on the other England and Prussia, were gradually gravitating towards the self-same thought,—the hatred of the Revolution. However, there was this difference, that liberal England and philosophical Prussia needed a little time in order to pass from one pole to the other, to prevail upon themselves to give themselves the lie, to abjure and disown their principles, and avow that they were the enemies of liberty. This worthy struggle between decency and shame was to be treated delicately by Austria ; therefore, by waiting, an infinite advantage would be obtained. A little longer, and all honest people would be agreed. Then, left quite alone, what would France do ? . . What an enormous advantage would Austria presently have over her, when assisted by all Europe !

Meanwhile, there was no harm in deluding the revolutionists of France and Belgium with fair words, in lulling them into security, and, if possible, in dividing them.

As soon as ever Leopold was made emperor (February 20th) and published his strange manifesto, in which he adopted the principles of the Belgian revolution, and acknowledged the legality of the insurrection against the emperor (March 2nd), his ambassador, M. Mercey d'Argenteau, prevailed upon Marie-Antoinette to master her repugnance and form an alliance with Mirabeau.

But, notwithstanding the facility of the orator's character, and his eternal need of money, this alliance was difficult to execute. He had been slighted and rejected at the time when he might have been useful. And now they came to court him, when all was compromised, and perhaps even lost.

In November they had had an understanding with the most revolutionary deputies to exclude Mirabeau from the ministry for ever ; and now they invited him.

He was summoned for an enterprise that had become impossible, after so many acts of imprudence and three unsuccessful plots.



The ambassador of Austria himself undertook to recall from Belgium the man the most likely to prove the best mediator, M. de Lamarek, Mirabeau's personal friend, and also personally devoted to the queen.

He returned. On the 15th of March he took to Mirabeau the overtures of the Court, but found him very cool; for his good sense enabled him to perceive that the Court merely proposed to him that they should sink together.

When pressed by Lamarek, he said that the throne could only be restored by establishing it upon the basis of liberty; that if the Court wanted anything else, he would oppose it instead of serving it. And what guarantee had he for this? He himself had just proclaimed before the Assembly how little confidence he put in the executive power. In order to pacify him, Louis XVI. wrote to Lamarek that he had never desired anything but a power limited by the laws.

Whilst this negotiation was pending, the Court was carrying on another with Lafayette. The king gave him a written promise of the most absolute confidence. On the 14th of April, he asked him his opinion on the royal prerogative, and Lafayette was simple enough to give it.

Now, seriously, what was it that the Court wanted? To gain time,—nothing more; to delude Lafayette, neutralise Mirabeau, annihilate his influence, keep him divided between opposite principles, and, perhaps, also to compromise him, as it had served Necker. The Court had ever shown its deepest policy in ruining and destroying its deliverers.

Exactly at the same period, and in the very same manner, the queen's brother, Leopold, was negotiating with the Belgian *progressists* and compromising them; then, when menaced by the people, denounced and prosecuted, they were at length induced to desire the invasion and the re-establishment of Austria.\*

How is it possible to believe that these precisely identical proceedings of the brother and the sister happened by mere chance to be the same.

Mirabeau, indeed, had reason to reflect twice before he trusted himself to the Court. It was the time when the king,

\* For the conduct of Leopold in Europe, and especially in Belgium, see Hardenberg, Borgnet, &c.

yielding to the importunate demands of the Assembly, gave up to it the famous *Red Book* (of which we shall presently speak) and the honour of so many persons ; all the secret pensioners heard their names cried in the streets. Who could assure Mirabeau that the Court might not think proper, in a short time, to publish also his treaty with it ? . . The negotiation was not very encouraging ; offers were made, and then withdrawn : the Court put no confidence in him at all, but demanded his secrets and the opinions of his party.

But a man like Mirabeau was not to be deluded so easily. However great might be his tendency to royalty in his heart, it was impossible to blind so keen-sighted a person. Meanwhile, he proceeded in his usual course : as the organ of the Revolution, his voice was never wanting on decisive occasions ; he might have been gained over, but he was neither to be silenced, enervated, nor neutralised. Whenever the state of affairs was urgent, the vicious and corrupt politician instantly disappeared ; the god of eloquence took possession of him, his native land acted by him, and thundered by his voice.

In the single month of April, whilst the Court was hesitating, bargaining, and concluding, the power of his eloquence smote it twice.

The first blow (which we postpone to the next chapter, in order to keep together whatever relates to the clergy) was his famous apostrophe on Charles IX. and the St. Bartholomew massacre, which is to be found in every memoir : “ From hence I behold the window,” &c. Never had the priests been stunned by so terrible a blow ! (April 13th.)

The second affair, no less serious, was on the question whether the Assembly should dissolve ; the powers of several deputies were limited to one year, and this year was drawing to a close. As far back as the 6th of October, a proposal had been made (and then very properly) to dissolve the Assembly. The Court was expecting and watching for the moment of dissolution,—the interregnum,—the ever perilous moment between the Assembly that exists no longer, and the one not yet formed. Who was to reign in the interval but the king, by ordinances ? And having once resumed his power and seized the sword, it would be his business to keep it.

Maury and Cazalès in forcible, but irritating and provoking,

speeches, asked the Assembly whether its powers were unlimited, —whether it considered itself a *National Convention*; they insisted on this distinction between convention and legislative assembly. These subtleties provoked Mirabeau into one of those magnificent bursts of eloquence which reached the sublime: “You ask,” said he, “how, being deputies of bailiwicks, we have made ourselves a convention? I will answer. The day when, finding our assembly-room shut, bristling and defiled with bayonets, we hastened to the first place that could contain us, and swore we would rather perish,—on that day, if we were not a convention, we became one. Let them now go and hunt out of the useless nomenclature of civilians the definition of the words *National Convention*! Gentlemen, you all know the conduct of that Roman who, to save his country from a great conspiracy, had been obliged to outstep the powers conferred upon him by the laws. A captious tribune required from him the oath that he had respected them. He thought, by that insidious proposal, to leave the consul no alternative but perjury, or an embarrassing avowal. I swear, said that great man, that I have saved the republic! Gentlemen, I swear also, that you have saved the commonwealth!”

At that splendid oath, the whole Assembly arose, and decreed that there should be no elections till the constitution was finished.

The Royalists were stunned by the blow. Several, nevertheless, thought that the hope of their party, the new election, might even have turned against them; that it might, perhaps, have brought about a more hostile and violent assembly. In the immense fermentation of the kingdom, and the increasing ebullition of public feeling, who could be sure of seeing his way clearly? The mere organisation of the municipalities had shaken France to her centre. Scarcely were they formed when, by their side, societies and clubs were already organised to watch over them: formidable, but useful societies; eminently useful in such a crisis; a necessary organ and instrument of public distrust, in presence of so many conspiracies.

The clubs will grow greater and greater; it must be so: the state of things requires it. This period is not yet that of their greatest power. For the rest of France, it is the period of confederations; but the clubs already reign at Paris.

Paris seems to be watching over France, panting and on the alert ; keeping its sixty districts permanently assembled ; not acting, but ever ready. It stands listening and uneasy, like a sentinel in the neighbourhood of the enemy. The watch-word "Beware !" is heard every hour ; and two voices are incessantly urging it forward,—the club of the Cordeliers, and that of the Jacobins. In the next book, I shall enter those formidable caverns ; in this place I abstain. The Jacobins are not yet characterised, being in their infancy, or rather in a spurious constitutional age, in which they are governed by such men as Duport and the Lameths.

The principal character of those great laboratories of agitation and public surveillance, of those powerful machines (I speak especially of the Jacobins), is that, as in the case with all machinery, collective action was far more predominant than individual influence ; that the strongest and most heroic individual there lost his advantages. In societies of this kind, active mediocrity rises to importance ; but genius has very little weight. Accordingly, Mirabeau never willingly frequented the clubs, nor belonged exclusively to any ; paying short visits, and passing an hour at the Jacobins, and another in the same evening at the club of '89, formed in the Palais-Royal by Sieyès, Bailly, Lafayette, Chapelier, and Talleyrand (May 13).

This was a dignified and elegant club, but devoid of action : true power resided in the old smoky convent of the Jacobins. The dominion of intrigue and commonplace oratory, there sovereignly swayed by the triumvirate of Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, contributed not a little to render Mirabeau accessible to the suggestions of the Court.

This man was contradiction personified. What was he in reality ? A royalist, a noble in the most absolute sense. And what was his action ? Exactly the contrary ; he shattered royalty with the thunders of his eloquence.

If he really wished to defend it, he had not a moment to lose ; it was hourly declining. It had lost Paris ; but it still possessed large scattered crowds of adherents in the provinces. By what art could these be collected into a body ? This was the dream of Mirabeau. He meditated organising a vast correspondence, doubtless similar, and in opposition to that of the Jacobins. Such was the groundwork of Mirabeau's

treaty with the Court (May 10th). He would have constituted in his house a sort of ministry of public opinion. For this purpose, or under this pretext, he received money and a regular salary ; and as he was accustomed to do everything, whether good or evil, boldly and publicly, he established himself in grand style, kept his carriage and open house in the little mansion which still exists in the Chaussée d'Antin.

All this was but too manifest ; and it appeared still clearer, when, from the midst of the left of the Assembly, he was seen to speak with the right in favour of royalty, to obtain for the king the initiative of making peace or war.

The king had lost the management of the interior, and afterwards power in the law courts : the judges as well as the municipal magistrates were being abstracted from his prerogative. If he was now to lose war, what would remain of royalty ? Such was the argument of Cazalès. Barnave and the opposite side had a thousand ready answers without uttering a word effectually. The truth was, that the king was distrusted ; that the Revolution had been made only by shattering the sword in his hands ; that of all his powers the most dangerous that they could leave in his hands was war.

The occasion of the debate was this. England had been alarmed at seeing Belgium offer its alliance to France. Like the Emperor and Prussia, she began to be afraid of a vivacious and contagious revolution which captivated both by its ardour and a character of human (more than national) generality, very contrary to the English genius. Burke, a talented, but passionate and venal Irishman, a pupil of the Jesuits of Saint Omer, vented, in parliament, a furious philippic against the Revolution, for which he was paid by his adversary Mr. Pitt. England did not attack France ; but she abandoned Belgium to the Emperor, and then went to the other end of the world to seek a quarrel on the sea with Spain, our ally. Louis XVI. intimated to the Assembly that he was arming fourteen vessels.

Thereupon, there arose a long and complicated theoretical discussion on the general question,—to whom belonged the initiative of making war. Little or nothing was said on the particular question, which nevertheless commanded the other. Everybody seemed to avoid it—to be afraid of considering it.



Paris was not afraid of it, but considered it attentively. All the people perceived and said that if the king swayed the sword, the Revolution must perish. There were fifty thousand men at the Tuileries, in the Place Vendôme, and the Rue Saint Honoré, waiting with inexpressible anxiety, and greedily devouring the notes flung to them from the windows of the Assembly, to enable them to keep pace every moment with the progress of the discussion. They were all indignant and exasperated against Mirabeau. On his entering and leaving the Assembly, one showed him a rope, another a pair of pistols.

He testified much calmness. Even at moments when Barnave was occupying the tribune with his long orations, thinking the time had come to overthrow him, Mirabeau did not even listen, but went out to take a walk in the garden of the Tuileries amid the crowd, and paid his respects to the youthful and enthusiastic Madame de Staël, who was there also waiting with the people.

His courage did not make his cause the better. He triumphed in speaking on the theoretical question, on the natural association (in the great act of war) between thought and power, between the Assembly and the king. But all this metaphysical language could not disguise the situation of affairs.

His enemies took every unparliamentary means, akin to assassination, which might have caused him to be torn in pieces. During the night they caused an atrocious libel to be written, printed, and circulated. In the morning, on his way to the Assembly, Mirabeau heard on all sides the cry of "The discovery of the great treachery of Count de Mirabeau." The danger, as was always the case with him, inspired him admirably; he overwhelmed his enemies: "I knew well," cried he, "how short is the distance from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock," &c.

He thus triumphed on the personal question. And even on the question in debate, he made a skilful retreat; at the first opportunity afforded him by the proposal of a less startling formula, he turned about, yielded on the form but gained the substance. It was decided that the king had the right to make the *preparations*, to *direct* the forces as he would, that he *proposed* war to the Assembly, which was to decide on nothing that was not *sanctioned* by the king (May 22nd).



On leaving the Assembly, Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, who were retiring in despair, were applauded and almost carried home by the people, who imagined they had gained the day. They had not the courage to tell them the truth. In reality the Court had the advantage.

It had just experienced on two occasions the power of Mirabeau,—in April against it, and in May in its favour. On the latter occasion, he had made superhuman efforts, sacrificed his popularity, and risked his life. The queen granted him an interview, the only one, in all probability, that he ever had.

There was another weak point in this man which cannot be dissembled. A few proofs of confidence, doubtless exaggerated by the zeal of Lamarek, who wished to bring them together, excited the imagination of the great orator—a credulous being, as such men ever are. He attributed to the queen a superiority of genius and character of which she never gave any proof. On the other hand, he easily believed, in his pride and the sense of his superiority, that he whom nobody could resist would easily captivate the mind of a woman. He would much rather have been the minister of a queen than of a king—the minister, or rather the lover.

The queen was then with the king at Saint Cloud. Surrounded by the national guard, generally disposed in their favour, they found themselves pretty free, in a sort of half captivity, since they used to go every day to take long walks, sometimes to the distance of several leagues, without guards. There were, however, many kind good-natured persons who could not bear the idea that a king and a queen should be the prisoners of their subjects. One day, in the afternoon, the queen heard a slight sound of lamentation in the solitary court of Saint Cloud; she raised the curtain and saw beneath her balcony about fifty persons, countrywomen, priests, and old chevaliers of Saint Louis, who were silently weeping and stifling their sobs.

Mirabeau could not be callous to such impressions. Having remained, in spite of all his vices, a man of ardent imagination and violent passion, he found some happiness in feeling himself the supporter, the defender, perhaps the deliverer of a handsome and captive queen. The mystery of the interview added to his

emotion. He went, not in his carriage, but on horseback, in order not to attract any attention, and he was received, not at the castle, but in a very solitary spot, at the highest point in the private park, in a kiosk which crowned that fairy garden. It was at the end of May.

Mirabeau was then very evidently suffering from the malady that brought him to his grave. I do not allude to his excesses and prodigious fatigues. No, Mirabeau died of nothing but the hatred entertained towards him by the people. First adored and then execrated! To have had his prodigious triumph in Provence, where he felt himself pressed upon the bosom of his native land; next, in May, 1790, the people in the Tuileries demanding him that they might hang him! Himself facing the storm, without being sustained by a good conscience, laying his hand upon his breast and feeling there only the money received in the morning from the Court! All this, anger, shame, uncertain hope, were boiling in confusion in his troubled soul. With a dull, leaden, unhealthy complexion, sore red eyes, sunken cheeks, and symptoms of an unwieldy and unwholesome obesity, such appeared the violent Mirabeau, as he slowly wended his way on horseback through the avenue of Saint Cloud, injured and wounded, but not overthrown.

And how much also is that queen changed, who is waiting in her pavilion. Her thirty-five years begin to appear, that affecting age which Van-Dyck so often delighted to paint. Add, moreover, those delicate and faint purple hues which betoken profound grief—a malady, a deep-seated and incurable malady—of the heart and of the body. It is evidently an incessant internal struggle. Her carriage is haughty, and her eyes are dry; yet they show but too plainly that every night is passed in tears. Her natural dignity, and that of her courage and misfortune which constitute another royalty, forbid any kind of distrust. And much does he need to believe in her who now devotes himself to her service.

She was surprised to see that this man so detested and decried, this fatal man the first organ of the Revolution, this monster, in short, was still a man; that he possessed a peculiar charming delicacy, which the energy of his character would seem to exclude. According to every appearance, their conversation was vague and by no means conclusive. The queen had her own

intentions, which she kept to herself, and Mirabeau his, which he took no pains to conceal,—to save at the same time the king and liberty. How were they to understand each other? At the close of the interview, Mirabeau addressing himself to the woman as much as to the queen by a gallantry at once respectful and bold: “Madam,” said he, “when your august mother admitted one of her subjects to the honour of her presence, she never dismissed him without allowing him to kiss her hand.” The queen held forth her hand. Mirabeau bowed; then, raising his head, he exclaimed in a tone of sincerity and pride. “Madam, the monarchy is saved!”

He withdrew, affected, delighted,—and deceived! The queen wrote to her agent in Germany, M. de Flachslanden, that they were making use of Mirabeau, but that there was nothing serious in their connection with him.

At the time he had just gained, at the price of his popularity, and nearly of his life, that dangerous decree which in reality restored to the king the right of making peace and war, the king was causing a search to be made in the archives of the parliament for the ancient forms of protestation against the States-General, wishing to make a secret one against all the decrees of the Assembly (May 23rd).\*

Thank heaven the salvation of France did not depend on that great yet credulous man and that deceitful court. A decree restores the sword to the king; but that sword is broken.

The soldier becomes again one of the people, and mingles and fraternises with the people.

M. de Bouillé informs us in his Memoirs that he left nothing untried to set the soldiery and the people in opposition, and inspire the military with hatred and contempt for the citizens.

The officers had eagerly seized an opportunity of raising this hatred still higher, even to the National Assembly, and of calumniating its conduct towards the soldiery. One of the staunchest patriots, Dubois de Crancé, had expounded to the Assembly the lamentable composition of the army, recruited for

\* The king sent thither the keeper of the seals himself, who, during the emigration, revealed the fact to Montgaillard. As to the queen's letter to Flachslanden, the original still exists in a particular collection, and has been read, not by me, but by a very careful learned person, worthy of confidence, employed in the archives.

the most part with vagabonds ; and thence deduced the necessity of a new organisation which would make the army what it has been, the flower of France. Now it was this language, so well intentioned towards the military,—this attempt to reform and rehabilitate the army, that they abused. The officers went about saying and repeating everywhere to the soldiers that the Assembly had insulted them. This gave great hope to the Court ; for it expected to be thus able to regain possession of the army. These significant words were written to the commandant of Lille from the office of the ministry : “ Every day we are gaining ground a little. Only just forget us and reckon us as nothing, and soon we shall be everything ” (December 8th, January 3rd).

Vain hope ! Was it possible to believe that the soldier would long remain blind, that he would see without emotion that intoxicating spectacle of the fraternity of France, that, at a moment when his native land was found again, he alone would obstinately remain outside his home, and that the barracks and the camp would be like an isle separated from the rest of the world ?

It is doubtless alarming to see the army deliberating, distinguishing, and choosing in its obedience. Yet, in this case, how could it be otherwise ? If the soldier were blindly obedient to authority, he disobeyed that supreme authority whence all others proceed ; if docile to his officers, he found himself infallibly a rebel to the commander of his commanders,—the Law. Neither was he at liberty to abstain and remain neuter ; the counter-revolution had no intention to do so ; it commanded him to fire on the Revolution,—on France,—on the people,—on his father and his brother, who were holding forth their arms to embrace him.

The officers appeared to him what they were, the enemy,—a nation apart, becoming more and more of another race and a different nature. As inveterate hardened sinners bury themselves still deeper in sin on the approach of death, so the old system towards its close was more cruel and unjust. The upper grades were no longer given to any but the young men of the Court, to youthful *protégés* of noble ladies ; Montbarry, the minister, has himself related the violent and shameful scene between himself and the queen in favour of a young colonel.

The least important grades, still accessible under Louis XIV. and Louis XV., were, in the reign of Louis XVI., given only to those who were able to prove four degrees of nobility. Fabert, Catinat, and Chevert, would have been unable to attain the rank of lieutenant.

I have said what was the budget for war (in 1784): forty-six millions for the officer, and forty-four for the soldier. Why say soldier? Beggar would be the proper term. The pay, comparatively high in the seventeenth century, is reduced to nothing under Louis XV. It is true that under Louis XVI. another pay was added, settled with the cudgel. This was to imitate the famous discipline of Prussia; and was supposed to contain the whole secret of the victories of Frederick the Great: man driven like a machine, and punished like a child. This is most assuredly the worst of all systems, thus uniting opposite evils,—a system at the same time mechanical and non-mechanical; on one hand fatally harsh, and on the other violently arbitrary.

The officers sovereignly despised the soldier, the citizen, and every kind of man; and took no pains to conceal this contempt. Yet, wherefore? What was their great merit? Only one, they were good swordsmen. That respectable prejudice which sets the life of a brave man at the discretion of the skilful constituted for the latter a kind of tyranny. They even tried this sort of intimidation on the Assembly; in the chamber of the nobility, certain members fought duels to prevent others from uniting with the Third-Estate. Labourdonnaie, Noailles, Castries, Cazalès, challenged Barnave and Lameth. Some of them addressed gross insults to Mirabeau, in the hope of getting rid of him; but he was immutable. Would to heaven that the greatest seaman of that time, Suffren, had been equally impassible! According to a tradition which is but too probable, a young coxcomb of noble birth had the culpable insolence to call out that heroic man, whose sacred life belonged only to France: and he, already in years, was simple enough to accept, and received his death wound. The young man having friends at court, the affair was hushed up. Who rejoiced? England; for so lucky a stroke of the sword she would have given millions.

The people have never had the wit to understand this point of



honour. Men like Belzunce and Patrice, who defied everybody, laboured in vain. The sword of the emigration broke like glass under the sabre of the Republic.

If our land officers, who had done nothing, were nevertheless so insolent, good heavens ! what were our officers of the navy ! Ever since their late successes (which, after all, were only brilliant single fights of one vessel with another), they could no longer contain themselves ; their pride had fretted into ferocity. One of them having been so remiss as to keep company with an old friend, then a land officer, they forced him to fight a duel with him, to wash out the crime ; and, horrible to relate, he killed him !

Acton, a naval officer, was as if King of Naples ; the Vaudreuil surrounded the queen and the Count d'Artois with their violent counsels ; other naval officers, the Bonehamps and Marignis, as soon as France had to face the whole of Europe, stabbed her behind with the poignard of La Vendée.

The first blow to their pride was given by Toulon. There commanded the very brave, but very insolent and hard-hearted Albert de Rioms, one of our best captains. He had thought he could lead both towns, the Arsenal and Toulon, in precisely the same manner, like a crew of galley-slaves, with a cat-o'-nine-tails, protecting the black cockade, and punishing the tricolour. He trusted to an agreement which his naval officers had made with those of the land, against the national guard. When the latter came to make their complaints, headed by the magistrates, he gave them the reception that he would have given to the galley-slaves in the Arsenal. Then a furious multitude besieged the commandant's hotel. He ordered the soldiers to fire, but nobody obeyed. At last, he was obliged to entreat the magistrates of the town to grant him their assistance. The national guard, whom he had insulted, had great difficulty in defending him ; and were only able to save him by putting him in his own prison (November, December, 1789).

At Lille, an attempt was made in the same manner to bring the troops and the national guards to blows, and even to arm one regiment against another. Livarot, the commandant (as appears in his unpublished letters), urged them on by speaking to them of the pretended insult offered them by Dubois de Crancé in the National Assembly. The Assembly replied only by



measures to improve the condition of the soldiery, testifying at least some interest for them, as far as it could, by the augmentation of a few deniers added to their pay. What encouraged them much more, was to see that, at Paris, M. de Lafayette had promoted all the subaltern officers to the superior grades. Thus the insurmountable barrier was at length destroyed.

Poor soldiers of the ancient system, who had so long suffered beyond all hope and in silence ! . . Without being the wonderful soldiers of the Republic and the empire, they were not unworthy of having also at last their day of liberty. All I read of them in our old chronicles, astonishes me with their patience, and affects me with the kindness of their hearts. I beheld them, at La Rochelle, entering the famished city and giving their bread to the inhabitants. Their tyrants, their officers, who shut them out from every career, found in them only docility, respect, kindness, and benevolence. In some skirmish or other under Louis XV., an officer fourteen years of age, who had but just arrived from Versailles, was unable to march any further: "Pass him on to me," said a gigantic grenadier, "I will put him on my back; in case of a bullet, I will receive it for the child."

It was inevitable that there should be at length a day for justice, equality, and nature; happy were they who lived long enough to behold it: it was indeed a day of happiness for all. What joy for Brittany to find again the pilot of Duguay-Trouin, nearly a hundred years of age, still in his humble profession; he whose calm and resolute hand had steered the conqueror to battle. Jean Robin, of the Isle of Batz, was recognised at the elections, and with one accord placed by the side of the president. People blushed for France for so long a period of injustice, and wished, in the person of this venerable man, to honour so many heroic generations unworthily slighted and trampled upon, during their lives, by the insolence of those who profited by their services, and then, alas! condemned them to oblivion

## CHAPTER VII.

## A RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE.—THE PASSION OF LOUIS XVI.

Legend of the Martyr King.—Scandal created by opening the Convents.—

The Clergy excite the Ignorant Masses.—The Agent of the Clergy wishes to act in concert with the Emigrants.—The Clergy and the Nobility in Opposition.—Manœuvres of the Clergy at Easter.—The Assembly publishes the *Red-Book*, April, 1790.—It Mortgages the Paper-Money on the Ecclesiastical Estates.—The Clergy summon the Assembly to declare Catholicism the National Religion, April 12th, 1790.

It was too evident that the soldier was not to be armed against the people ; therefore, it became necessary to find a way of arming the people against themselves,—against a revolution made entirely on their account. ✓

To the spirit of confederation and union, to the new revolutionary faith, nothing could be opposed but the ancient faith, if it still existed.

In default of the old fanaticism, either extinct, or at least profoundly torpid, the clergy had a hold that has seldom failed them, the easy good-nature of the people, their blind sensibility, their credulity towards those whom they love, their inveterate respect for the priest and the king—the king, that ancient worship, that mystic personage, a compound of the two characters of the priest and the magistrate, with a gleam of the grace of God !

There the people had even addressed their prayers and their groans ; and well do we know with what success,—what a sad return. In vain did royalty trample them under foot and crush them, like a mereiless machine ; they still loved it as a person.

Nothing was easier to the priests than to make Louis XVI. appear in the light of a saint or a martyr. His sanctified, paternal, and heavy-looking countenance (uniting the characteristic features of the houses of Saxony and Bourbon) was that of a cathedral saint, ready made for a church-porch. His short-sighted air, and his indecision and insignificance,

invested him precisely with that vague mystery so very favourable for every legend.

This was an admirable, pathetic text, well calculated to affect the hearts of men. He had loved the people, desired their welfare, and yet he was punished by them. Ungrateful madmen had dared to raise their hand against that excellent father, against God's anointed! The good king, the noble queen, the saint-like princess Elizabeth, and the poor little dauphin, were captives in that horrid Paris! How many tears flowed at such a narration; how many prayers, vows, and masses to heaven for their deliverance! What female heart was not bursting when, on leaving the church, the priest whispered: "Pray for the poor king!" Pray also for France,—is what they ought to have said; pray for a poor people, betrayed and delivered up to foreigners.

Another text, no less powerful for exciting civil war, was the opening of the convents, the order for making an inventory of the ecclesiastical possessions, and the reduction of the religious houses. This reduction was nevertheless conducted with the kindest solicitude. In every department, one house at least was reserved for every order, whither those who wished to remain might always retire. Whoever was willing to come out, came out and received a pension. All this was moderate, and by no means violent. The municipalities, very kindly disposed at that period, showed but too much indulgence in the execution of their orders. They often connived, and scarcely took an inventory, frequently noting only half the objects, and half the real value. No matter! Nothing was left untried to render their task both difficult and dangerous. The day of the inventory, the accursed day on which laymen were to invade the sacred cloisters, was clamorously noised abroad. To arrive even at the gate, the municipal magistrates were first obliged, at the peril of their lives, to pass through a collected mob, amid the screams of women, and the threats of sturdy beggars fed by the monasteries. The gentle lambs of the Lord, opposed to the representatives of the law, forced to execute the law, refusals, delays, and resistance enough, to cause them to be torn in pieces.

All that was prepared with much skill and remarkable address. If it were possible to give a complete history of it,

with all its particulars, we should be very much edified on a curious subject of transcendental philosophy ; how, at a period of indifference and incredulity, politicians can make and rekindle fanaticism ? A grand chapter this would be to add to the book imagined by a philosopher,—“ The Mechanism of Enthusiasm.”

The clergy were devoid of faith ; but they found for instruments persons who still possessed it, people of conviction, pious souls, ardent visionaries with poetical and whimsical imaginations, which are ever to be found, especially in Brittany. A lady, named Madame de Pont-Levès, the wife of a naval officer, published a fervent mystical little volume, called “ The Compassion of the Virgin for France,” a female composition well adapted to females, calculated to excite their imagination, and turn their brains.

The clergy had, moreover, another very easy means of acting on those poor populations ignorant of the French language. They allowed them to remain ignorant of the suppression of the tithes and collections, said not a word about the successive abolition of the indirect taxes, and plunged them in despair, by pointing out to them the burden of taxation which oppressed the land, and informing them that they were presently to be deprived of one-third of their goods and cattle.

The south offered other elements of anarchy no less favourable ; men of feverish passion, active, fervent, and political, whose minds, full of intrigue and cunning, were well calculated not only to create a revolt, but to organise, regulate, and direct an insurrection.

The real secret of resistance, the only way that gave any serious chance to the counter-revolution, the idea of the future Vendée, was first reduced to a formula at Nîmes : Against the Revolution, no result is possible without a religious war. In other words : Against faith, no other power but faith.

Terrible means, that make us shudder when we remember—when we see the ruins and deserts made by ancient fanaticism. What would have happened, if all the South and the West, all France, had become a Vendée ?

But the counter-revolution had no other chance. To the genius of fraternity only one could be opposed, that of the St. Bartholomew massacre.

Such was, in general terms, the thesis which, as early as January, 1790, was supported at Turin, before the general council of the emigration, by the fervent envoy of Nîmes, a man sprung from the people, and possessed of little merit, but obstinate and intrepid, who saw his way clearly and frankly stated the question.

The man who, by special grace, was thus admitted to speak before princes and lords, Charles Froment, for such was his name, the son of a man accused of forgery (afterwards acquitted), was himself nothing more than a petty collector for the clergy and their factotum. After being a revolutionist at first, he had perceived that at Nîmes there was more business to be done on the opposite side. He had at once found himself the leader of the Catholic populace, whom he let loose on the Protestants. He himself was much less fanatical than factious, a man fit for the period of the Ghibelins. But he saw very plainly that the true power was the people,—an appeal to the faith of the multitude.

Froment was graciously received and listened to, but little understood. They gave him some money, and the hope that the commandant of Montpellier would furnish him with arms. Moreover, they were so little aware how very useful he might be, that subsequently, when he emigrated, he did not even obtain from the princes permission to join the Spaniards and put them in communication with his former friends.

“What ruined Louis XVI.,” says Froment in his pamphlets, “was his having philosophers for ministers.” He might have extended this still further, with no less reason. What rendered the counter-revolution generally powerless, was that it possessed within itself, at different degrees, but still it possessed at heart, the philosophy of the age, that is to say, the Revolution itself.

I have said, in my Introduction, that everybody, even the queen, the Count d'Artois, and the nobility, was, at that time, though in a different degree, under the influence of the new spirit.

The language of ancient fanaticism was for them a dead letter. To rekindle it in the masses was for such minds an operation quite incomprehensible. The idea of exciting the people to rebel, even in their favour, gave them alarm. Besides,

to restore power to the priests, was a thing quite contrary to the ideas of the nobility; they had ever been waiting and hoping for the spoils of the clergy. The interests of these two orders were adverse and hostile. The Revolution, which seemed likely to bring them together, had caused a wider separation. Nobles who were proprietors, in certain provinces, in Languedoc for instance, gained by the suppression of church tithes more than they lost by their feudal rights.

In the debate on the monastic vows (February), not one noble sided with the clergy. They alone defended the old tyrannical system of irrevocable vows. The nobles voted with their usual adversaries for the abolition of vows, the opening of the monasteries, and the liberty of the monks and nuns.

The clergy take their revenge. When the question is to abolish the feudal rights, the nobility cry out, in their turn, about violence, atrocity, &c. The clergy, or at least the majority of the clergy, let the nobility cry on, vote against them, and help to ruin them.

The advisers of the Count d'Artois, M. de Calonne and others, and the queen's Austrian advisers, were certainly, like the party of the nobility in general, very favourable to the spoliation of the clergy, provided it was performed by themselves. But rather than employ ancient fanaticism as a weapon, they much preferred making an appeal to foreigners. On this head they had no repugnance. The queen beheld in the foreigners her near relations; and the nobility had throughout Europe connexions of kindred, caste, and common culture, which rendered them very philosophical on the subject of the vulgar prejudices of nationality. What Frenchman was more a Frenchman than the general of Austria, the charming Prince de Ligne! And did not French philosophy reign triumphant at Berlin? As for England, for our most enlightened nobles, she was precisely the ideal, the classic land of liberty. In their opinion there were but two nations in Europe,—the polite and the impolite. Why should they not have called the former to France, to reduce the others to reason?

So, we have here three counter-revolutions in operation without being able to act in concert.

1st. The queen and the ambassador of Austria, her chief adviser, are waiting till Austria, rid of her Belgian affair, and



securing the alliance of Europe, shall be able to threaten France, and subdue her (if necessary) by physical force.

2nd. The emigration party, the Count d'Artois, and the brilliant chevaliers of the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, who, tired to death of Turin and wanting to return to their mistresses and actresses, would like the foreign powers to act at once, and open for them a road to France, cost what it would; in 1790 they were already wishing for 1815.

3rd. The clergy are still less inclined to wait. Sequestered by the Assembly, and gradually turned out of house and home, they would like at once to arm their numerous clients, the peasants and farmers;—at once, for to-morrow perhaps they would all grow lukewarm. How would it be if the peasant should think of purchasing the ecclesiastical lands? Why then the Revolution would have conquered irrevocably.

We have seen them in October firing before the word was given. In February, there was a new explosion even in the Assembly. It was the time when the agent of Nîmes, on his return from Turin, was scouring the country, organising Catholic societies, and thoroughly agitating the South.

In the midst of the debate on the inviolability of vows, a member of the Assembly invoked the rights of nature, and repelled as a crime of ancient barbarity this surprising of man's will, which, on a word that has escaped his lips or been extorted from him, binds him and buries him alive for ever. Thereupon loud shouts of "Blasphemy! blasphemy! He has blasphemed!" The Bishop of Nancy rushes to the tribune: "Do you acknowledge," cried he, "that the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion, is the religion of the nation?" The Assembly perceived the blow, and avoided it. The answer was, that the question of the suppression of the convents was especially one of finances; that there was nobody who did not believe but that the Catholic religion was the national religion; and that to sanction it by a decree would be to compromise it.

This happened on the 13th of February. On the 18th, they issued a libel, diffused in Normandy, wherein the Assembly was devoted to the hatred of the people, as assassinating at the same time religion and royalty. Easter was then approaching; the opportunity was not lost: they sold and distributed about the churches, a terrible pamphlet,—*"The Passion of Louis XVI."*

To this legend the Assembly was able to oppose another, of equal interest, which was, that Louis XVI., who, on the 4th of February, had sworn fidelity to the constitution, still kept a permanent agent with his brother, amid the mortal enemies of the constitution ; that Turin, Treves, and Paris, were like the same court, kept and paid by the king.

At Treves was his military establishment, paid and maintained by him, with his grand and private stables, under Prince de Lambese.\* Artois, Condé, Lambese, and all the emigrants were paid enormous pensions. And yet alimentary pensions of widows and other unfortunates of two, three, or four hundred francs were indefinitely postponed.

The king was paying the emigrants in defiance of a decree by which the Assembly had, for the last two months, attempted to withhold this money which was thus passing over to the enemy ; and this decree he had precisely forgotten to sanction. The irritation increased, when Camus, the severe reporter of the financial committee, declared he could not discover the application of a sum of sixty millions of francs. The Assembly enacted that, for every decree presented for royal sanction, the keeper of the seals should render an account *within eight days* of the royal sanction or refusal.

Great was the outcry and lamentation on this outrageous exaction against the royal will. Camus replied by printing the too celebrated "Red Book," (April 1,) which the king had given up in the hope that it would remain a secret between him and the committee. This impure book, defiled at every page with the shameful corruption of the aristocracy, and the criminal weaknesses of royalty, showed whether people had been wrong in shutting up the filthy channel through which the substance of France was flowing away. A glorious book, in spite of all that ! For it plunged the Revolution into the hearts of men.

\* Everything was carried on exactly as at Versailles ; it was a ministry that the king kept publicly abroad. Whatever was done at Paris was regulated at Treves. The accounts of expenses and other unpublished papers, show Lambese signing the accounts, executing petitions sent from Paris, appointing *employés* for Paris, pages for the Tuileries, &c. Uniforms for the body-guards were made in France to be sent to Treves ; and horses were brought over from England for the officers at that place. The king entreats Lambese to be so good as to keep at least French horses.

“ Oh ! how rightly we have acted ! ” was the general cry ; and how far people were, even in their most violent accusations, from suspecting the reality ! At the same time, the faith grew stronger that this monstrous old system of things, contrary to nature and God, could never return. The Revolution, on beholding the hideous face of her adversary, unveiled and unmasked, felt strong, living, and eternal. Yes, whatever may have been the obstacles, delays, and villainies, she lives and will live for ever !

A proof of this strong faith is that in the universal distress, and during more than one insurrection against indirect taxation, direct taxes were punctually and religiously paid.

Ecclesiastical estates are set up for sale to the value of four hundred millions of francs ; the city of Paris alone purchases the value of half, and all the municipalities follow this example.

This method was very good. Few individuals would have wished themselves to have expropriated the clergy ; the municipalities alone were able to undertake this painful operation. They were to purchase, and then sell again. There was much hesitation, especially among the peasantry ; for this reason, the cities were to give them the example in purchasing and selling again, first the ecclesiastical houses ; after which would come the sale of the lands.

All those properties served as mortgage for the paper-money created by the Assembly. To each note a lot was assigned and affected ; and these notes were called *assignats*. Every piece of paper was property,—a portion of land ; and had nothing in common with those forged notes of the Regency, founded on the Mississippi, on distant and future possessions.

Here the pledge was tangible. To this guarantee, add that of the municipalities that had purchased of the State and were selling again. Being divided among so many hands, those lots of paper-money once given out and circulated, were about to engage the whole nation in this great operation. Everybody would have a part of this money, and thus both friends and enemies would be equally interested in the safety of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, the remembrance of Law, and the traditions of so many families ruined by his system, were no slight obstacle.

France was far less accustomed than England or Holland to behold real values circulating in the form of paper. It was necessary for a whole nation to rise superior to their every-day habits ; it was an act of spiritualism, of revolutionary faith, that the Assembly demanded.

The clergy were terrified on seeing that their spoils would thus be in the hands of the whole people ; for after having been reduced to impalpable powder, it was very unlikely that they should ever come again into their possession. They endeavoured at first to liken these solid assignats, each of which was land, to the Mississippi rubbish : “ I had thought,” said the Archbishop of Aix in a perfidious manner, “ that you had really renounced the idea of bankruptcy.” The answer to this was too easy. Then, they had recourse to another argument. “ All this,” said they, “ is got up by the Paris bankers : the provinces will not accept it.” Then, they were shown addresses from the provinces demanding a speedy creation of assignats.

They had expected at least to gain time, and in the interval to remain in possession, ever waiting and watching to seize some good opportunity. But even this hope was taken from them : “ What confidence,” said Prieur, “ will people have in the mortgage that founds the assignats, if the mortgaged estates are not really in our hands ?” This tended to dispossess and dislodge the clergy immediately, and to put all the property into the hands of the municipalities and districts.

In vain did the Assembly offer them an enormous salary of a hundred millions : they were inconsolable.

The Archbishop of Aix in a whining discourse, full of childish and unconnected lamentations, inquired whether they would really be so cruel as to ruin the poor, by depriving the clergy of what was given for the poor. He ventured this paradox that a bankruptcy would infallibly follow the operation intended to prevent the bankruptcy ; and he accused the Assembly of having meddled with spiritual things by declaring vows invalid, &c.

Lastly, he went so far as to offer, in the name of the clergy, a loan of four hundred millions, mortgaged upon their estates.

Whereupon Thcuret replied with his Norman impassibility : “ An offer is made in the name of a body *no longer existing.*”

And again : “ When the religion sent you into the world, did it say to you : go, prosper, and acquire ? ”

There was then in the Assembly a good-natured simple Carthusian friar, named Dom Gerles, a well-meaning short-sighted man,—a warm patriot, but no less a good Catholic. He believed (or very probably he allowed himself to be persuaded by some cunning ecclesiastic) that what gave so much uneasiness to the prelates, was solely the spiritual danger, the fear lest the civil power should meddle with the altar. “ Nothing is more simple,” said he ; “ in order to reply to persons who say that the Assembly wishes to have no religion, or that it is willing to admit every religion in France, it has only to decree : “ That the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, is and shall ever be the religion of the nation; and that its worship is the only one authorised ” (April 12, 1790).

Charles de Lameth expected to escape the difficulty, as on the 13th of February, by saying that the Assembly, which, in its decrees, followed the spirit of the Gospel, had no need to justify itself in this manner.

But the word was not allowed to drop. The Bishop of Clermont bitterly rejoined, and pretended to be astonished that, when there was a question of doing homage to the religion, people should deliberate instead of replying by a hearty acclamation.

All the right side of the Assembly arose, and gave a cheer.

In the evening they assembled at the Capucins, and—to be provided in case the Assembly should not declare Catholicism the national religion—prepared a violent protest to be carried in solemn procession to the king, and published to a vast number of copies throughout France, in order to make the people well understand that the National Assembly desired to have no kind of religion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE.—SUCCESS OF THE COUNTER-  
REVOLUTION, (MAY, 1790.)

Continuation.—The Assembly eludes the question.—The King dares not receive the Protest of the Clergy (April.)—Religious Outbreak in the South (May.)—The South ever inflammable.—Ancient Religious Persecutions; Avignon and Toulon.—Fanaticism, grown lukewarm, skilfully rekindled.—The Protestants still excluded from Civil and Military functions.—Unanimity of these two forms of Worship in 1789.—The Clergy rekindle Fanaticism, and organise a resistance at Nîmes (1790.)—They awaken Social Jealousies.—Terror of the Protestants.—Outbreak at Toulouse, at Nîmes (April.)—Connivance of the Municipalities.—Massacre at Montauban (May 10th.)—Triumph of the Counter-Revolution in the South.

THE motion made by that plain man had wonderfully changed the aspect of affairs. From a period of debate, the revolution appeared suddenly transported into an age of terror.

The Assembly had to contend with terror of two kinds. The clergy had a silent formidable argument, well understood; they exhibited to the Assembly a Medusa, civil war, the imminent insurrection of the west and the south, the probable resurrection of the old wars of religion. And the Assembly felt within itself the immense irresistible force of a revolution let loose, that was to overthrow everything,—a revolution which had for its principal organ the riots of Paris, thundering at its doors, and often drowning the voices of the deputies.

In this affair, the clergy had the advantage of position; first, because they seemed to be in personal danger; that very danger sanctified them: many an unbelieving, licentious, intriguing prelate suddenly found himself, under favour of the riots, exalted to the glory of martyrdom—a martyrdom nevertheless impossible, owing to the infinite precautions taken by Lafayette, then so strong and popular, at the zenith of his glory,—the real king of Paris.

The clergy had moreover in their favour the advantage of a clear position, and the outward appearances of faith. Hitherto



interrogated and placed at the bar by the spirit of the age, it is now their turn to question, and they boldly demand "Are you Catholics?" The Assembly replies timidly, in a disguised equivocal tone, that it cannot answer, that it respects religion too much to make any answer, that, by paying such a religion, it has given sufficient proof, &c.

Mirabeau said hypocritically: "Must we decree that the sun shines?" and another: "I believe the Catholic religion to be the only true one; I respect it infinitely. It is said the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Are we then to confirm such language by some miserable decree?" &c. &c.

But d'Espremeuil tore away this mask of hypocrisy by his energetical language: "Yes," said he. "When the Jews crucified Jesus Christ, they said, 'Hail, king of the Jews!'"

Nobody replied to this terrible attack. Mirabeau remained silent, and crouched, like a lion about to make a spring. Then seizing the opportunity afforded by a deputy who was quoting, in favour of intolerance, some treaty or other made by Louis XIV.: "And how," cried he, "should not every kind of intolerance have been consecrated in a reign signalised by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. If you appeal to history, forget not that hence, from this very tribune, I behold the window whence a king, armed against his people by an execrable faction, that disguised personal interest under the cloak of religion, fired his arquebuss, and gave the signal for the "Saint Bartholomew!"

And, with his gesture and finger, he pointed to the window, which from that place it was impossible to perceive; but he mentally saw it, and everybody saw it.

The blow struck home. What the orator had said revealed precisely what the clergy wanted to do. Their plan was to carry to the king a violent protestation which would have armed believers, and to put the arquebuss into the king's hands, to fire the first shot.

Louis XVI. was not a Charles IX.; but, being very sincerely convinced of the right of the clergy, he would have accepted the peril for what he considered the safety of religion. However, three things prevented him: his natural indecision, the timidity of his ministry, and, lastly, more than all the rest, his fears for the life of the queen,—the terror of the 6th of

October daily renewed, that violent menacing crowd beneath his windows, that ocean-multitude beating against his walls. At every resistance the queen seemed in peril. Moreover, she herself had other views and different hopes, far removed from the clergy.

An answer was returned, in the name of the king, that if the protest were brought to the Tuileries, it would not be received.

We have seen how the king, in February, had discouraged Bouillé, the officers, and the nobility. In April, his refusal to support the clergy would deprive them of courage if they could ever lose it when the question concerns their wealth. Maury said in a rage that people should know in France whose hands contained royalty.

It now remained to act without the king. Were they to act with the nobility? And yet the clergy could not rely much even on their assistance. They still had the monopoly of all the grades; but, not being sure of the soldiers, they were afraid of an outbreak and were less impatient and less warlike than the priests. Froment, the agent of the clergy at Nîmes, although he had obtained an order from the Count d'Artois, was unable to persuade the commandant of the province to allow him to make use of the arsenal, and yet the business was urgent. The great confederations of the Rhone had intoxicated the whole country, and that of Orange in April had completed the general enthusiasm. Avignon no longer remembered that it belonged to the pope, but sent to Orange, with all the French towns. Had they waited a moment longer, it would have escaped them. If the chief towns of aristocracy and fanaticism, like Avignon and Arles, with which the clergy were ever threatening, themselves became revolutionary, the counter-revolution, held moreover in close quarters by Marseilles and Bordeaux, had no longer any hope. The explosion must take place now or never.

We should not at all understand the eruptions of these old volcanoes of the South, if we did not previously examine that ever burning soil. The infernal flames of the stakes which were there kindled so many times, those contagious sulphurous flames seem to have gained the very soil, so that unknown conflagrations are there ever undermining the land. It is like

those burning coal-pits in the Aveyron, the fire is not at the surface ; but, if you plunge a cane into that yellow turf, it smokes, takes fire, and reveals the hell that is dormant at your feet.

May animosity ever decline !—But it is necessary that reminiscences should remain, that so many woes and sufferings be never lost for the experience of men. It is necessary that the first and most sacred of our liberties, religious freedom, go to strengthen itself and revive at the sight of the horrible ruins left by fanaticism.

The very stones speak in default of men. Two monuments especially deserve to be the objects of a frequent pilgrimage,—two opposite yet instructive monuments,—the one infamous, the other sacred.

The infamous one is the palace of Avignon, that Babel of the popes, that Sodom of legates, that Gomorrah of cardinals ; a monstrous palace covering the whole brow of a mountain with its obscene towers, the scene of lust and torture, where priests showed to kings that, in comparison to them, they were mere novices in the abominable arts of sensuality. The originality of the construction is that the places of torture not being far removed from the luxurious aleoves, ball rooms, and festive halls, they might very easily have heard, amid the singing in the courts of love, the shrieks and groans of the tortured, and the breaking and cracking of their bones. Priestly prudence had provided against this by a scientific arrangement of the vaults, proper to absorb every kind of noise. The superb pyramidal hall where the flaming piles were erected (imagine the interior of a cone of sixty feet) testifies a frightful knowledge of acoustics ; only here and there a few traces of oily soot still call to mind the burning of flesh.\*

The other place, both holy and sacred, is the Baigne (for galley-slaves) at Toulon, the Calvary of religious liberty, the place where the confessors of the faith, the heroes of charity, died a lingering death beneath the lash.

Be it remembered that several of these martyrs, condemned to the galleys for life, were not Protestants, but men accused of having allowed Protestants to escape !

\* This pyramidal hall for burning victims, must not be confounded with the Tour de la Glacière, of which I shall speak hereafter

Some were sold during the reign of Louis XV. For a fair price (120*l.*), a galley-slave might be purchased. M. de Choiseul, to pay his court to Voltaire, gave him one as a free gift.

This horrible code, which our Reign of Terror copied without ever being able to equal it, armed children against their fathers, gave them their property beforehand, so that the son was interested in keeping his father at Toulon.

What is more curious than to witness the Church, *the groaning dove*, groaning in 1682, when little children had just been carried away from their heretical mothers—groaning to deliver them? No; for the king to find laws more efficacious and severe. Yet how could any ever be found more severe than these?

At every assembly of the clergy, the dove continues to groan. Nay, even under Louis XVI., when they allowed the spirit of the time to extort from them that glorious charter of enfranchisement which had ever excluded the Protestants from every public employment, the clergy address fresh groans to the king by Loménie, an atheistical priest.

I entered full of trembling and respect into that holy *bagne* of Toulon. There I sought for the vestiges of the martyrs of religion and those of humanity, killed there with ill-treatment, for having had manly hearts, for having alone undertaken to defend innocence and perform the work of God!

Alas! nothing remains. Nothing remains of those atrocious and superb galleys, gilded and sanguinary, more barbarous than those of Barbary, and which the lash watered with the blood of those saints. Even the registers, in which their names were inscribed, have for the most part disappeared. In the few that remain, there are only laconic indications, their entrance and their exit; and that exit was generally death.—Death which came more or less speedily, thus indicating the degrees of resignation or despair. A terrible brevity, two lines for a saint, two or three for a martyr. No note has been taken of the groans, the protestations, the appeals made to heaven, the silent prayers, or the psalms chanted in a low voice amidst the blasphemies of thieves and murderers.—Oh! all that must be elsewhere. “Be comforted! The tears of men are engraven for eternity in rock and marble!” said Christopher Columbus.

In marble? No, but in the human soul. In proportion as I studied and learned, I was consoled to see that indeed those obscure martyrs nevertheless bore their fruit,—admirable fruit: the amelioration of those who saw or heard them, a melting of the heart, a humanising of the soul in the eighteenth century, an increasing horror of fanaticism and persecution. In course of time, there remained nobody to enforce those barbarous laws. The intendant Lenain (de Tillemont), a nephew of the illustrious Jansenist, on being obliged to condemn to death one of the last of those Protestant martyrs, said to him: “Alas! sir, such are the king’s orders.” He burst into tears, and the convict tried to comfort him.

Fanaticism was expiring of itself. It was not without trouble and much labour, that, from time to time, politicians managed to rekindle the flame. When the parliament, accused of scepticism, jansenism, and anti-jesuitism, seized the opportunity afforded by Calas, to recover its former reputation, when, in concert with the clergy, it attempted to agitate the old fury of the people, it was found to be quite dormant.

It succeeded only by means of brotherhoods, generally composed of petty people, who, as tradespeople, or in some other manner, were the clients of the clergy. In order to trouble, bewitch, alarm, and inflame the minds of the people, they did what is done at the races, where a hot coal is inserted under the skin of a horse, which then becomes mad. Only the coal in this case was an atrocious comedy, a frightful exhibition. The brotherhoods, in their white ominous costume (the hood concealing their faces, with two holes for the eyes), solemnised a death festival for the son that Calas had killed, as they said, to prevent him from abjuring. Upon an enormous catafalque, surrounded with wax-candles, a skeleton was seen, moved by springs, holding in one hand the palm of martyrdom, and in the other a pen to sign the abjuration of heresy.

We know how the blood of Calas recoiled upon the fanatics, and the excommunication hurled upon the murderers, the false judges and wicked priests by the old pontiff of Ferney. On that day, struck by lightning, they began to tumble down a declivity where it is impossible to stop; they rolled down head foremost, the reprobates, till they plunged into the gulf of the Revolution.



And on the eve, at the very brink of the abyss, royalty, which they were dragging with them, in their fall, at length thought proper just to be humane. An edict appeared (1787) in which it was confessed that the Protestants were men ; they were permitted to be born, to marry, and to die. In other respects, they were by no means citizens, being excluded from civil employments, and unable either to administer, to judge, or to teach ; but admitted, as their only privilege, to pay the taxes and their persecutors, the Catholic clergy, and to maintain, with their money, the altar that cursed them.

The Protestants of the mountains cultivated their meagre country. The Protestants of the cities carried on trade, the only thing they were allowed to do, and, by degrees, as they felt themselves more safe, a few of the industrious arts. Having been kept down, in cruel subjection, out of every kind of employment, or influence, and excluded most especially for a hundred years from every military grade, they no longer had any resemblance with the hardy Huguenots of the sixteenth century ; and Protestantism was reduced to its starting point of the middle ages,—industry and commerce. If we except the Cevenols, incorporated in their rocks, the Protestants in general possessed very little land ; their riches, already considerable at this period, were houses and factories, but especially and essentially moveables, such as can always be transported.

The Protestants of the province of Gard, were, in 1789, rather more than fifty thousand male inhabitants (as in 1698, and also in 1840, the number has varied very little), consequently very weak, isolated, and totally unconnected with their brethren of the other provinces, lost like a point, an atom, in a vast multitude of Catholics, who were counted by millions. At Nîmes, the only town where the Protestants were assembled in any considerable number, they were six thousand to twenty-one thousand men of the other religion. Of the six thousand, three or four thousand were workmen of manufactories, an unwholesome diminutive race, miserable, and subject, as the workman is everywhere, to frequent want of work.

But the Catholics were never out of work, being chiefly tillers of the ground, and their very mild climate admitting of that kind of labour in every season. Many of them had a bit of land, and cultivated at the same time for the clergy, the



nobility, and the wealthy Catholic burgesses, who possessed the whole of the environs.

The Protestants of the towns, well-informed, moderate, and serious, confined to a sedentary life, and devoted to their reminiscences, having in each family a subject of grief and perhaps also of fear, were almost devoid of enterprise, and lost to all hope. When they beheld the glorious dawn of the first day of liberty, on the eve of the Revolution, they durst hardly indulge in hope. They let the parliaments and the nobility advance boldly and speak in favour of the new ideas ; but, generally, they themselves remained silent. They knew perfectly well that to impede the Revolution, it would have been sufficient to be seen expressing their sympathy.

It burst forth. The Catholics, be it said to their honour, the great majority of the Catholics, were delighted to see the Protestants at length become their equals. The unanimity was affecting, and one of the sights the most worthy to call down the blessing of God upon earth. In many parts, the Catholics went to the temple of the Protestants, and united with them to return thanks to Providence together. On the other hand, the Protestants attended at the Catholic *Te Deum*. For, above all the altars, every temple, and every church a divine ray had appeared in heaven.

The 14th of July was welcomed by the South, as also by all France, as a deliverance wrought by God,—a departure from the land of Egypt ; the people had crossed through the sea, and, safe on the opposite shore, were singing the song of praise. They were no longer Protestants and Catholics, but Frenchmen. It happened, without any intention or premeditation, that the permanent committee organised in the towns, was composed of persons of either religion ; so likewise was the national militia. The officers were generally Catholics, because the Protestants, strangers to military service, would hardly have been able to command. To make amends, they constituted the cavalry almost entirely, many of them having horses for the necessities of their trade.

However, after the lapse of two or three months, a project was set on foot at Nîmes and Montauban, to form new companies exclusively Catholic.

This glorious unanimity had disappeared. A serious and

solemn question, that of the estates of the clergy, had caused an entire change.

The clergy showed a remarkable power of organisation, and an intelligent activity in creating a civil war in a population that had no wish for it.

Three means were employed. First, the mendicant friars, the Capuchins and the Dominicans, who became the distributors and propagators of a vast number of *brochures* and pamphlets. Secondly, the publichouses (*cabarets*), and the petty retail wine-sellers, who, dependent on the clergy, the principal proprietors of vineyards, were on the other hand in communication with the lower orders of the Catholics, especially with the rural electors among the peasantry. The latter, on their way to town, used to halt at the cabaret; where they spent (and this includes our third article) twenty-four sous which the clergy gave them for every day they went to the elections.

Froment, the agent of the priests in all these doings, was more than a man; he was himself a legion,—acting at the same time by a vast number of hands, by his brother Froment (surnamed *Tapage*), his relations, and his friends. He had his bureau, his friends, his library of pamphlets and his den at the elections, close by the church of the Dominicans; and his house communicated with a tower commanding the ramparts: an excellent position for civil war, which defied musketry and was afraid of nothing but artillery.

Before having recourse to arms, Froment undermined the Revolution by the Revolution itself,—by the National Guard and the elections. Assemblies held at night in the church of the White Penitents, prepared the municipal elections in such a manner as to exclude all Protestants. The enormous powers which the Assembly gave to the municipal authorities, the right of calling out the troops, proclaiming martial law, and hoisting the red flag, are thus found to be placed, at Nîmes and Montauban, in the hands of the Catholics; and that flag will be hoisted for them, should they ever require it, and never against them.

The National Guard was next. It had been composed in July of the most fervent patriots, who hastened to enlist themselves; of those also who, possessing no other wealth than moveables, were the most afraid of pillage; such were the

merchants, for the most part Protestants. As for the rich Catholics, who were especially land proprietors, they could not lose their lands, and therefore were more slow in arming. When their castles were attacked, the National Guard, composed of Protestants and Catholics, took every care to defend them ; that of Montauban saved a château belonging to Cazalès the royalist.

To change this state of affairs, it was necessary to awaken envy and create a spirit of rivalry. This came soon enough of itself by the force of circumstances, apart from every difference of opinion and party. Every corps that seemed select, whether aristocratical, like the volunteers of Lyon and Lille, or patriotic, like the dragoons of Montauban and Nîmes, was equally detested. They excited against the latter those petty people who formed the great mass of the Catholic companies, by spreading a report among them that the others called them *cébetes* or onion-eaters. This was a gratuitous accusation ; for why should the Protestants have insulted the poor ? Nobody at Nîmes was poorer than the Protestant workmen. And their friends and defenders of the mountain, in the Cévennes, who often have no other food than chesnuts, led a harder, poorer, and more abstinent life than the onion-eaters at Nîmes, who eat bread also and often drink wine.

On the 20th of March, they heard that the Assembly, not satisfied to have opened to Protestants the road to public employment, had raised a Protestant, Rabaut Saint-Étienne, to the highest of all, a position then higher than the throne,—to the presidency of the nation. Nothing was yet ready,—few arms, if any ; nevertheless, the impression was so strong that four Protestants were assassinated by way of expiation—a fact contested, but certain.

Toulouse did penance for the sacrilege of the Assembly, made a public confession of its sins, and offered up nine days' prayers to avert the wrath of God. It was the period of an execrable festival, an annual procession made in remembrance of the massacre of the Albigenes. The brotherhoods of every denomination repair in crowds to the chapel erected on the field of slaughter ; and the most furious motions are made in the churches. Machinery is set to work in every direction. They fetch from their old lumber-rooms those instruments of fanaticism which played their parts at the time of the Dragonnades and the Saint-Bartho-

lornew massacre : virgins who shed tears praying for murders, and Christs to nod, &c. &c. Add, moreover, a few more recent inventions ; for instance, a Dominican to go about the streets of Nîmes, in his white monk-dress, begging his bread and weeping over the decrees of the Assembly ; at Toulouse, a bust of the captive king, the martyr-king, placed near the preacher and covered with a black veil, to be suddenly revealed at the pathetic moment in the sermon to ask assistance of the good people of Toulouse.

All that was too clear. It meant *blood* ! And the Protestants understood it.

Isolated amidst a vast Catholic population, they saw themselves a small flock marked for slaughter. The terrible reminiscences treasured in each family, would return to their minds at night and frighten them out of their sleep. The effects of this panic were whimsical enough ; the dread of the *brigands* which pervaded the rural districts, was often confounded in their imaginations with that of Catholic assassins ; and they hardly knew whether they were in 1790 or in 1572. At Saint-Jean-de-la-Gardonnenque, a small trading town, some couriers entered one morning, crying : “ Be on your guard ! here they are ! ” They ring the alarm-bell, run to arms, the women cling to their husbands to prevent them from going out ; they shut up their houses, put themselves in a state of defence, with paving-stones at the windows. And the town was indeed invaded, but by friends, the Protestants of the country, who had arrived by forced marches. Among them was seen a beautiful girl, armed, and carrying a gun, between her two brothers. She was the heroine of the day, and was crowned with laurel ; all the tradespeople recovering from their panic, clubbed among themselves for their lovely deliverer ; and she returned to her mountains with her dowry in her apron.

Nothing could allay their fears but a permanent association between the communes, an armed confederation. They formed one towards the end of March in a meadow of the Gard, a sort of island between a canal and the river, sheltered from every kind of surprise. Thousands of men repaired thither, and what was more comforting, the Protestants saw a great number of Catholics mingled with them under their banner. The peaceful Roman ruins which crown the landscape filled their

minds with loftier thoughts ; they seemed to have survived in order to despise and see decline those miserable quarrels of religion, and to have the promise of a more noble age.

The two parties were drawn up in array and ready to act ; Nimes, Toulouse, and Montauban were watching Paris and waiting. Let us compare dates. On the 13th of April, in the bosom of the Assembly, they obtain from it a spark to kindle all the South,—its refusal to declare Catholicism the predominant religion ; on the 19th the clergy protest. As early as the 18th Toulouse protests with fire-arms ; there they act the scene of the king's bust ; the patriots shout " Long live the king and the law ! " and the soldiers fire on them.

On the 20th, at Nimes, is a great and solemn *Catholic declaration* signed by three thousand electors, and backed with the signatures of fifteen hundred *distinguished persons*,—a declaration forwarded to all the municipalities in the kingdom, followed and copied at Montauban, Albi, Alais, Uzès, &c. This article, planned at the White Penitents, was written by Froment's clerks, and signed in his house by the populace. It amounted to a criminal accusation against the National Assembly ; and gave it notice that it had to restore power to the king, and to bestow upon the Catholic religion the monopoly of public worship.

At the same time, they were striving to form new companies in every direction. These were strangely composed, consisting of ecclesiastical agents, peasants, marquises and domestics, nobles and porters. In default of guns, they had pitch-forks and scythes ; they were also secretly fabricating a terrible murderous weapon,—pitchforks with edges like a saw.

The municipalities, created by the Catholics, pretended not to see all this ; they seemed to be very busily engaged in strengthening the strong, and weakening the weak. At Montauban, the Protestants, six times less numerous than their adversaries, wanted to accede to the federative covenant which the Protestants of the rural districts had just formed ; but the municipality would not allow it. They next attempted to disarm their animosity by withdrawing from the public employments to which they had been raised, and causing Catholics to be appointed in their stead. This was taken for weakness ; and the religious crusade was not the less preached in the



churches. The vicars-general excited the minds of the people still more by causing prayers of forty hours to be said for the safety of the religion in peril.

The municipality of Montauban at length threw off the mask by an affair that could not fail to bring about an explosion. For the execution of the decree of the Assembly ordering an inventory to be made in the religious communities, it chose precisely Rogation-Day, the 10th of May. It was also during a Spring festival that the Sicilian Vespers took place. The season added much to the general excitement. This festival of Rogation is the moment when the whole population is out of doors, and full of emotions aroused by worship and the season, feels that intoxicating influence of Spring, so powerful in the South. Though occasionally retarded by the hail-storms of the Pyrenees, it burst out only with greater vigour. Everything seems then to be emerging and springing forth at once—man from his house, and the grass from the earth; and every creature leaps with joy; it is like a *coup d'état* of Providence—a revolution in nature.

And well did they know that the women who go whining about the streets their lachrymose canticles *Te rogamus, audi nos*—well did they know that they would urge their husbands to the fight, and cause them to be killed, rather than allow the magistrates to enter the convents.

The latter begin their march, but, as they might have foreseen, are stopped short by the impenetrable masses of the people, and by women sitting and lying before the sacred thresholds. It would be necessary to walk over them. They therefore withdraw, and the crowd becomes aggressive; it even threatens to burn down the house of the military commandant, a Catholic, but a patriot. It marches towards the Hôtel-de-Ville, in order to force the arsenal. If it succeeded in doing so; if, in that state of fury, it seized upon arms, the massacre of the Protestants and patriots in general must have begun.

The municipality had the power of calling out the regiment of Languedoc; but it declined doing so. The national guards march of their own accord and occupy the military post that covers the Hôtel-de-Ville, where they are soon besieged. Far from succouring them, assistance is sent to the furious populace,



whom they cause to be supported by the persons employed in the excise. Five or six hundred shots are fired against the windows. The unfortunate guards pierced with bullets, several being killed, a great number wounded, and being without ammunition, show a white handkerchief and ask them to spare their lives. The firing continues all the same, and the wall, their only defence, is demolished. Then the culpable municipality decides, *in extremis*, to do what it ought to have done before—to call out the regiment of Languedoc, which, for a long time, had desired to advance.

During this butchery, a noble lady had caused masses to be said.

Those who have not been killed are therefore at length able to go forth. But the fury of the populace was not exhausted. Their dress, the national uniform, is torn from them, as is also the cockade, which is trampled under foot. Bare-headed, holding tapers in their hands, and stripped to their shirts, they are then dragged along the streets, stained with their blood, as far as the cathedral, where they are made to kneel on the steps to do penance. . . In front march the mayor, bearing a white flag.

For less cause, France had caused the insurrection of the 6th of October ; for a less outrage offered to the tri-coloured cockade, she had overthrown a monarchy.

We tremble for Montauban when we perceive the terrible exasperation that such an event would excite, and the strong fellowship which, even at that time, bound together the whole nation from north to south. If there had been nobody in the south to avenge such an affront, all the centre and the north, the whole of France would have marched. The outrage was felt even in the most inconsiderable villages. I have now before me the threatening addresses of the populations of Marne and Seine-et-Marne on those indignities of the south.\*

The north was able to remain quiet. The south was quite sufficient. Bordeaux was the first to march ; then Toulouse,

\* I believe I have read everything relating far or near to these riots of Montauban, Nîmes, &c., and have stated nothing till I had compared and weighed the testimony, and formed my conviction with the attention of a jurymen.—This once for all. I quote but little, in order not to interrupt the unity of my narration.

on which those of Montauban had relied ; even Toulouse turned against them and demanded they should be chastised. Bordeaux advanced ; and, its numbers increasing, on its passage through the different communes, was obliged to send many away, being unable to feed such crowds of soldiers. The prisoners of Montauban were put in the van to receive the first fire (the only way of defending themselves imagined by the assassins). But van there was none ! The regiment of Languedoc fraternised with the people of Bordeaux.

Paris sent one of the king's commissioners, one of Lafayette's officers, a kind, and too indulgent person, who rather declared against his own party ; he sent back the Bordeaux people and entered into terms with the rioters. There was no inquiry as to the bloodshed ; the dead remained dead ; the wounded kept their wounded ; and the imprisoned remained in prison ; the king's commissary thought of no other way of getting them out than causing the favour to be asked of him by the very persons who had placed them there.

Everything took place in the same manner at Nimes. The Catholic volunteers boldly wore the white cockade and shouted "Down with the nation !" The soldiers and subaltern officers of the regiment of Guienne were indignant, and sought to quarrel with them. A single regiment, isolated amidst so vast a multitude, having on its side only the Protestant portion of the population, was in a hazardous position. Observe that it had its own officers against it, they having declared themselves the partisans of the white cockade, and also the municipality, who refused to proclaim the martial law. Many persons were wounded ; and a grenadier was aimed at and killed by Froment's own brother.

The soldiers were imprisoned, and the assassin was allowed to go free. So the counter-revolution was as triumphant at Nimes as at Montauban.

In the last-mentioned town, the conquerors were not satisfied with this, but had the audacity to go and make a collection among the families of the victims, nay, even in the prisons where they still remained. Oh horror ! They were not allowed their liberty till they had paid their assassins !

## CHAPTER IX.

A RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE.—THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION  
QUELLED IN THE SOUTH, (JUNE, 1790.)

Religious Indecision of the Revolution.—Violence of the Bishops.—The Revolution hopes to become reconciled with Christianity.—The last Christians. They urge the Assembly to a Reformation of the Clergy.—Resistance of the Clergy (May to June, 1790.)—Insurrection at Nîmes Repressed (June 13th.)—The Revolution Victorious at Nîmes, Avignon, and throughout the South.—The Soldier Fraternizes everywhere with the People (April to June, 1790.)

WHAT was the National Assembly doing at Paris at this time? It was following the clergy in the procession of Corpus-Christi.

Its more than Christian meekness, in all this, is a surprising spectacle. It was satisfied with a single concession which the ministers obtained from the king. He forbade the white cockade and condemned those who had signed the declaration of Nîmes. The latter got off easily by substituting, in place of their cockade, the red tuft of the ancient Leaguers; and they boldly protested that they persisted for the king against the king's orders.

This was clear, simple, and vigorous; the clerical party knew very well what they wanted. The Assembly knew it not. It was then accomplishing a feeble, deceptive task, what was then called the civil constitution of the clergy.

Nothing was more fatal to the Revolution than to be self-ignorant in a religious point of view,—not to know that it had a religion in itself.

It neither knew itself nor Christianity; it knew not exactly whether it was conformable or contrary to it—whether it was to go back to it or march forward.

In its easy confidence, it welcomed with pleasure the sympathy testified towards it by the bulk of the lower clergy. It was told, and it expected that it was about to realise the promises of the Gospel; that it was called to reform and renew

Christianity, and not to replace it. It believed this and marched in this direction ; but, at its second step, it found that the priests had become priests again, the enemies of the Revolution ; and the Church appeared what it really was—the obstacle, the main impediment, far more than even royalty. ✓

The Revolution had done two services for the clergy : given them an existence and an easy livelihood, and liberty to the monks. And this is precisely what enabled Episcopacy to turn them against it ; the bishops designating every priest friendly to the Revolution to the hatred and contempt of the people, as gained, bought over, and corrupted by temporal interests. Honour and the spirit of party impelled the priests towards ingratitude ; and they quitted Revolution, their benefactress, for Episcopacy, their tyrant !

Strange enough, it was to defend their prodigious fortunes, their millions, their palaces, horses, and mistresses, that the prelates imposed upon the priests the law of martyrdom. Many a one who wanted to preserve his income of eight hundred thousand francs, imputed to the country curate, as a shame, the twelve hundred francs' salary that he accepted from the Assembly.

The lower clergy thus found themselves, from the very first, and for a question of money, forced to make a choice. The bishops did not allow them a moment for reflection ; but declared to them that, if they were for the nation, they were against the Church,—out of the Catholic unity, beyond the communion of the bishops and the Holy See, contaminated, rejected, renegade, and apostate members.

What were those poor priests to do ? Leave the old system, in which so many generations had lived ; become suddenly rebels to that imposing authority, which they had ever respected, and quit the known world for another ? And what other, what new system ? It is necessary to have an idea, and a faith in that idea, thus to leave the shore and embark in the future.

A truly patriotic curate, he of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, who, on the 14th of July, marched under the banner of the people, at the head of his district, was overwhelmed and frightened at the cruel alternative in which he was placed by the bishops. He remained forty days in sackcloth, on his knees, before the altar ; and though he had remained there for ever, he would

not have found any answer to the insoluble question which now presented itself.

Whatever ideas the Revolution possessed, it owed to the eighteenth century, to Voltaire and Rousseau. During the twenty years that had passed between the great period of those two masters and the Revolution, between the thought and the execution, nobody had seriously continued their work.

Therefore the Revolution found the human mind at the point where they had left it: ardent humanity in Voltaire, fraternity in Rousseau; two foundations, assuredly religious, but merely laid, and with scarcely any superstructure.

The last testament of the century is in two pages of Rousseau, of a very opposite tendency.

In one, in the "Social Contract," he establishes and proves, that the Christian neither is, nor can be a citizen.

In the other, which is in "Emile," he yields to an affecting enthusiasm for the Gospel and Jesus, so far as to say, "His death is that of a God!"

This effusion of sentiment and affection was noted and stored up as a valuable avowal, a solemn self-denegation of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Thence arose an immense misunderstanding, which still remains.

People began to read the Gospel again; and in that book of resignation, submission, and obedience to authority, they read every moment what they themselves had in their hearts,—liberty and equality. Indeed, they appear there in every page; only, we must not make a mistake, equality in obedience, as the Romans had made it for every nation; and liberty internal, inactive, entirely pent up in the soul, just as it was able to be conceived, when, every national resistance having ceased, the hopeless world saw the growing stability of the Eternal Empire.

Assuredly, if there be a situation of things opposite to that of 1789, it is this. Nothing could be more strange than to seek in that affecting legend of resignation, the code of a period when man had claimed his rights.\*

\* And from this false study of the Gospel, they passed on to a no less false interpretation of the whole Christian system. There also they found just what they had in their thoughts, liberty; they found that Christianity, which



The Christian is that resigned man of the ancient empire, who places no hope in his personal action, but believes he shall be saved solely and exclusively by Christ. There are very few Christians. There were three or four in the Constituent Assembly. At that period, Christianity (doubtless living and durable as a sentiment\*) was dead as a system. Many mistook this point; among others, numbers of the friends of liberty, who, being affected by the Gospel, imagined themselves, on that account, to be Christians. As to popular life, Christianity preserved only what it owes to its anti-Christian part, borrowed or imitated from paganism (I mean the idolatry of the Virgin and the Saints), and to the material and sensuous devotion of the Sacred-Heart.

The true Christian principle, that man is saved only by the

originates in a transgression committed by Adam, an abuse of liberty, is the religion of *liberty*. Yes, of liberty *lost*; that is what ought to have been added. Liberty appears at the starting-point of the system, but to perish irrevocably. The fatality of the first transgression carries with it the whole human race. The few that escape are saved, not by the use of liberty, but by the arbitrary grace of Christ. If you insist that man's free-will should be accounted as something, you lessen the merits of the Saviour; if you will have it that we are saved by free-will, Christ is no longer the Saviour.—To say all in one word: liberty is in every living system; therefore it is in Christianity; it is even its starting-point, but it is not its great, characteristic, and predominant law, that which constitutes the life of the system. The Christian dogma is not the dogma of liberty, but of a *powerless* liberty; it teaches the transmission of a liberty *lost*; it places salvation in grace, which is the free activity of God, but *not ours*. This explains why every kind of despotism, feudal, royal, no matter what, has grounded itself on Christianity.

\* A sweet sentiment, which at all times has been, more or less, in the human soul. It bursts forth with various characters, but always with infinite charm, in the ever conquered Indian, in the Jew in captivity (in the books of Ruth and Tobias, &c.) Then, after the Hellenic world, after the fall of cities and nationalities, when a native-land is despaired of, you find it again in those poor exiles whom the sword of Rome made in every region; they derive their inspiration from the most affecting resignation, and the forgiveness of enemies. Thus, the bondman Terence becomes the friend of Scipio, who has destroyed his native-land; thus, Virgil, the peasant of Mantua, adores the merciless gods who have condemned his city: no bitterness, no rancour, only an infinite melancholy. This sentiment of resigned meekness and benevolence towards all mankind, especially towards those who have cruelly wronged us, is anterior to Christianity, as old as the world and hopeless grief: nevertheless, it has very justly been called Christian feeling, since Christianity has made it so general and profound. Under its influence, the whole of the middle ages becomes a Virgil.



grace of Christ, after being solemnly condemned by the Pope towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV., has only pined away, its defenders ever diminishing in numbers, hiding, resigning themselves to their fate, and dying without either a complaint or a struggle. And it is by so doing that this party proves, as much as by its doctrine, that it is indeed and truly Christian. It lies hid, as I have said, though it still possesses men of a singular power, whom it might show to its great advantage.

I, who seek my faith elsewhere, and who turn my eyes towards the east, have nevertheless been unable to behold, without the deepest emotion, these men of another age silently becoming extinct. Forgotten by all men, except pagan-christian authority, which practises towards them, unknown to the world, the most cowardly persecution\*, they will die in their respect. I had an opportunity of trying them. One day, when in my lectures I was about to encounter their great men of Port-Royal, I expressed an intention of giving utterance to my thoughts, and of disburdening my heart; of saying that then and now, in these men as in Port-Royal, it was paganism persecuting Christianity. They entreated me to do nothing of the kind (and may they forgive me for having violated their secret): "No, sir," said they; "there are situations in which one must learn to die in silence." And, as I insisted from sympathy, they avowed to me ingenuously that, in their opinion, they had not long to suffer; that the great and last day, which will judge both men and doctrines, could not be far; the day when the world will begin to live and cease to die. . . . He who, in their name, told me these strange things, was a young man, serious and pale, prematurely old, who would not tell me his name, and whom I never saw afterwards. That apparition has remained upon my mind as a noble farewell with the past. I seemed to hear the last words of the Bride of Corinth: "We will go down into the tomb, to rejoin our ancient gods."

There were three such men in the Constituent Assembly;

\* A truly cowardly persecution, which deals especially with females, the last surviving Jansenist sisters, whom they are harassing to a lingering death; cowardly also in its fury against the church of Saint Séverin. It has not been demolished, like Port-Royal, but transformed, abandoned to the paganism of the Sacred-Heart, and periodically polluted with Jesuitical preachers

neither of them had any genius, nor was any one of them an orator; and yet they exercised certainly a great,—too great influence. Heroic, disinterested, sincere, and excellent citizens, they contributed more than anybody to drive the Revolution into the old impracticable paths; and, as far as in them lay, they made it a reformer, and yet prevented its being a founder, innovator, a creator.

What was necessary to be done in 1790 and 1800? It was necessary at least to wait, and make an appeal to the living powers of the human mind.

Those powers are eternal, and in them is the inexhaustible fountain of philosophical and religious life. No period ought to be despaired of; the worst of modern times, that of the Thirty Years' War, nevertheless produced Descartes, the regenerator of the mind of Europe. It was necessary to appeal to life, and not organise death.

The three men who impelled the Assembly to commit this great blunder, were named Camus, Grégoire, and Lanjuinais.

Three men of unconquerable resolution. Those who saw Camus lay his hand on Dumouriez amidst his army, and those who, on the 31st of May, saw Lanjuinais, when hurled down from the tribune, rushing back to it and holding on, between daggers and pistols, know that few men would appear brave if compared to those two. As to Bishop Grégoire, after remaining in the Convention, during the whole of the reign of Terror, alone on his bench, in his violet robe, nobody daring to sit near him, he has left behind him the reputation of the firmest character that perhaps ever appeared. Terror recoiled before that inflexible priest. During the most stormy days and the most sombre nights of the Convention, it had in Grégoire the immutable image of Christianity, its dumb protest, and its threat of resurrection.

These men, so intrepid and pure, were not the less the supreme temptation of the Revolution; they led it to commit this serious blunder—to organise the Christian Church without believing in Christianity.

Under their influence, and that of the legists who followed their steps without perceiving the mistake, the Assembly, for the most part sceptical and Voltairian in its ideas, imagined that it might alter the exterior without changing the ground-

work. It presented the strange spectacle of a Voltaire reforming the Church, and pretending to restore to it its apostolic severity.

But setting aside the incurable defect of this suspicious origin, the reformation was reasonable ; it might be called a charter of deliverance for the Church and the clergy.

The Assembly wishes that the clergy should be in future the elect of the people, emancipated from the *Concordat*, a shameful covenant by which two thieves, the king and the pope, had shared the Church between them and cast lots for its vesture ;—enfranchised, by their superior remuneration of a regular salary, from the odious necessity of exacting tithes, and such like casualties, and fleecing the people ;—enfranchised from an unjust system of promotion and those petty court *abbés* who used to spring from boudoirs and alcoves into the episcopacy ;—lastly, free from all locusts and big-bellied priests, and from the ridiculous cages for fattening prebendaries. Add a better division of the dioceses, henceforth of equal extent, with eighty-three bishoprics, the same number as that of the departments, the revenue fixed at seventy-seven millions of francs, and the clergy better paid with this sum than with its three hundred millions formerly, from which they derived so little advantage.

The debate was neither powerful nor profound. There was only one bold sentence pronounced, and that was said by the Jansenist Camus, and certainly it went beyond his meaning : “ We are a National Convention,” said he ; “ *we have assuredly the power to change the religion ;* but we shall not do so.” Then, being frightened at his own audacity, he added very quickly : “ We could not abandon it without crime” (June 1st, 1790). Being legists and theologians, they invoked only texts and musty volumes : at every contested quotation they hastened to fetch their books, and were anxious to prove, not that their opinion was good, but that it was old : “ Thus did the early Christians.” A poor argument ! It was very doubtful whether a thing proper at the age of Tiberius, remained so eighteen hundred years afterwards, in the reign of Louis XVI.

It was necessary, without any tergiversation, to examine, whether the right was above or below, in the king, the pope, or in the people.

What would election by the people produce ? Doubtless this

was unknown. But people knew perfectly well what was a clergy made by the king, the pope, and the lords.\* What countenance would those prelates, who cried out so loudly, have held, if they had been obliged to show by what oil and what hand they had been consecrated? The safest way for them was not to enter too closely into this question of origin. They declaimed by choice on the most temporal question, on the most foreign to the spiritual order, the division of the dioceses. In vain was it proved to them that this division, entirely imperial in its Roman origin, and made by the government, might be modified by another government. They would not listen to reason, but held fast. This division was the only thing, the holy of holies; no dogma of the Christian faith was more deeply implanted in their hearts. If a council were not convened, or if the matter were not referred to the pope, all was over; France was about to become schismatical, and from schismatical heretical; from heretical sacrilegious, atheistical, &c.

These solemn farces, which at Paris only caused people to shrug up their shoulders with contempt, had nevertheless the intended effect in the West and the South. There they were printed and distributed in an immense number of copies, with the famous protest in favour of the estates of the clergy, which, in two months, reached the thirtieth edition. Being repeated in the pulpit in the morning, commented in the confessional in the afternoon, and adorned with murderous annotations, this text of hatred and discord continued more and more to exasperate the women, rekindle religious strife, whet the poignards, and sharpen the pitchforks and scythes.

On the 29th and 31st of May, the Archbishop of Aix and the Bishop of Clermont (one of the principal leaders of the

\* The right of advowson, in the hands of the lords, had very curious effects. One Samuel Bernard, a Jew, who had bought a certain seigneurial manor, had, by that very fact, the right of appointing to such a benefice; between title-deeds and sales, he acquired the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost would descend, alas! from doings still more sad. Many a one was bishop by the grace of Madame de Polignac; another was appointed by La Pompadour, whilst another owed his bishopric to the wanton sports of Madame Du Barry with Louis XV. A handsome young abbé of twenty, abbé de Bourbon, endowed with an income of a million of francs, was the offspring of a noble young lady, sold by her parents and long brought up by the king for a momentary gratification.

revolt, and the king's confidential man) notified the ecclesiastical ultimatum to the Assembly: That no change could be made without the convocation of a council. And in the early part of the month of June blood was flowing at Nimes.

Froment had armed his surest companies, and had, at great expense, even dressed several of his men in the livery of the Count d'Artois. They were the first of the notorious *verdets* of the South. Being supported by an aid-de-camp of Prince de Condé, and backed by several municipal officers, he had at length extorted from the commandant of the province the promise to open the arsenal and give guns to all the Catholic companies: a last decisive act which the municipality and the commandant could not commit without declaring themselves frankly against the Revolution.

Let us wait a little longer, said the municipality; the elections of the department begin at Nimes on the 4th; let us go on gently till the voting, and manage to get places given to us.

Let us act, said Froment; the electors will vote better at the sound of the musketry. The Protestants are being organised, and they have established a powerful correspondence from Nimes to Paris, and from Nimes to the Cevennes.

Was Nimes a very sure place for the clergy if they waited? The town was about to feel, in its industry, an immediate benefit from the Revolution, the suppression of the taxes on salt, iron, leather, oil, soap, &c. And would the Catholic rural districts, very catholic before harvest, be equally so afterwards, when the clergy had exacted the tithes?

A trial was pending against the assassins of May, against Froment's brother. That trial was coming on very slowly, but still it was in preparation.

A last and decisive reason that forced Froment to act, was that the Revolution of Avignon had been effected on the 11th and the 12th, and that it was about to demoralise his party, and cause its weapons to fall from its hands. Before news had spread, he attacked, in the evening of the 13th, a favourable day, the Sunday after the festival of Corpus-Christi, a great portion of the populace having been drinking and become excited.

Froment, and the historians of his faction, the conquered party, make this incredible statement: that the Protestants began, that they themselves disturbed the elections, which



were all their hope ; they maintain that it was the few who undertook to slaughter the many (six thousand men against twenty thousand odd, without counting the suburbs).

And was that small body so very warlike and terrible ? It was a population that had remained for a century apart from every kind of military practice ; merchants, excessively afraid of pillage ; and feeble workmen, physically very inferior to the porters, vine-dressers, and labourers, whom Froment had armed. The dragoons of the National Guard, Protestants for the most part, tradespeople and their sons, were not men likely to stand against those strong hardy men who used to drink at discretion in the wine cabarets belonging to the clergy.

In every place where the Protestants were the majority, these two forms of worship presented a spectacle of the most affecting fraternity. At Saint-Hippolyte, for instance, the Protestants had desired, on the 5th of June, to mount guard with the others, for the procession of Corpus-Christi.

On the day of the outbreak at Nimes, the patriots, to the number of fifteen hundred at least, and the most active, had assembled at the club, without arms, and were deliberating ; the galleries were full of women. Horrible was their panic on hearing the first discharge of musketry (June 13th, 1790).

At the opening of the elections, eight days before, they had begun to insult and frighten the electors. They asked for a body of dragoons and patrols to disperse the threatening crowd. But that mob threatened the patrols still more ; and then the complaisant municipality kept the dragoons in their quarters. In the evening of the 13th, men wearing red tufts come and tell the dragoons that if they do not march off, they are dead men. They remain, and receive a discharge of fire-arms. The regiment of Guienne was thirsting to march to their assistance ; but the officers shut the doors and keep them to their quarters.

In presence of this unequal struggle, and seeing the elections so criminally disturbed, the municipality had a sacred duty to perform,—to display the red flag and call out the troops. But no municipality could be found. The electoral assembly of the department, in that hospitable town, is found to be abandoned by the magistrates, amid the firing of the musketry.



Among Froment's *Verdets* were even the domestics of several of the municipal officers confounded with those of the clergy. The troops, the National Guard receiving no requisition, Froment had the town all to himself; his people were able to butcher at discretion, and had now begun to force open the houses of the Protestants. Had he only been able to keep his momentary advantage, he would have received from Sommières, only four leagues distant, a regiment of cavalry, whose colonel, a warm partisan, offered him his men, his purse, and his service.

The affair then assuming the appearance of a real revolution, the commandant of the province would at length have followed the orders he had received from the Count d'Artois, and have marched upon Nîmes.

Contrary to every expectation, it was Nîmes itself that spoilt the whole affair. Of the eighteen Catholic companies formed by Froment, only three followed him. The fifteen others never stirred. A great lesson, clearly showing the clergy how much they had mistaken the real state of the public mind. In the hour of bloodshed, the old spirit of fanatical hatred, though skilfully rekindled by social jealousy, was not quite strong enough.

The great and powerful city of Nîmes, which they had expected to be able to drive so easily into rebellion, remained firm, like its indestructible monuments—its noble and eternal arena.

An infinitely small portion only of each party came to blows. The *Verdets* proved very brave, but furious and blind. The municipal officers, at length found, were forced to go two several times against them with the red flag; and twice they carried off all, the municipal officers and the red flag, in the very teeth of their enemies. They fired on the magistrates, the electors, and the king's commissaries; the next day, they fired on the attorney-general, and the lieutenant-criminal, who were taking an inventory of the dead. These crimes, capital as they assuredly were, called for the most speedy and severe repression; and yet all that the municipality claimed from the troops was to serve as patrols!

If Froment had had more people, he would doubtless have occupied the great position of the arenas, then easy to defend.

He left there a few men, and some others also in the convent of the Capueins. As for himself, he withdrew to his fort, on the ramparts, in the tower of the ancient castle. Once in his tower, in safety, and firing at his ease, he wrote to Sommières and Montpellier to obtain assistance. He sent also into the Catholic villages and caused them to ring their alarm-bells.

The Catholics were very slow, some even remained at home. But the Protestants were immediately on the alert. At the news of the danger in which the electors were placed, they marched all night, and between four and six o'clock the next morning, an army of Cevenols, with the tri-colour cockade, was at Nimes in battle array, shouting, *Vive la nation!*

Then the electors acted. Forming a military committee, by the help of a captain of artillery, they marched to the arsenal to procure some cannon. The entrance to it was by the street, or by the quarters of the regiment of Guienne. The officers, malevolently, told them to pass through the street. There, they were pierced with a volley of bullets; they then re-entered; and the officers, seeing their soldiers indignant, and about to turn against them, at length delivered up the cannon. The tower, being battered till a breach was made, was forced to parley. Froment, audacious to the last, sent an incredible missive, in which he offered "*to forget.*" . . . Then, there was no longer any favour to be expected, the soldiery vowing death against the besieged. An attempt was made to save them; but they rushed upon their own ruin: they fired whilst capitulating. They were forced into their tower, taken by storm, pursued, and massacred.

The second day, and the third, they were pursued everywhere, or, at least, under this pretext, many old quarrels were avenged. The convents of the Capueins (the pamphlet warehouse, from which they had fired moreover), was also forced, and everybody put to death. The case was the same with a celebrated cabaret, the head-quarters of the *Verdets*; and in this den they discovered two municipal magistrates. All this time, the two parties were firing at each other through the streets or from the windows. The savages from the Cévennes seldom gave any quarter; and in three days there were three hundred people killed. No church was pillaged, nor any woman insulted; they were temperate even in their fury. They

would never have imagined, like the *Verdets* of 1815, the flogging girls to death with a bat\* ornamented with a fleur-de-lis.

This cruel affair of Nîmes, perfidiously arranged by the counter-revolution, was curious, inasmuch as it destroyed its perpetrators. The snarer was caught in his own trap; it was the game hunting the huntsman!

Everything went wrong at once—at the moment of execution. They had reckoned on Montpellier; but the commandant durst not come. But the brave and patriotic National Guard, the future frame-work of the legion of victory, the 32nd demi-brigade came.

They had reckoned on Arles; and indeed Arles offered its assistance; but it was to crush the counter-revolutionary party. And as for Pont-Saint-Esprit, it arrested Froment's envoys!

Go, now, and summon the Catholics of the Rhone. Try to puzzle their minds, and make them believe that in all this your religion is in peril. No, the question is about our native land.

The whole of Catholic Rhone declares against you, and becomes far more revolutionary than the Protestants. Your own saintly city of the Rhone, the petty Rome of the pope, even Avignon, joins the Revolution.

O Avignon! Why could France ever have taken thee, thou precious diamond, from her diadem! . . . O Vaucluse! O pure eternal remembrance of Petrarch, noble asylum of the great Italian who died of love for France, thou adorable symbol of the future union of the two countries, why didst thou ever fall into the polluted hands of the pope! . . . For money, and to obtain absolution for a murder, a woman sold Avignon and Vaucluse (1348)!

Avignon, without taking counsel, had, like France, made for itself a national militia, a municipality. On the 10th of June, all the nobility and partisans of the pope, being masters of the Hôtel-de-Ville and four pieces of cannon, shout: "Aristocracy for ever!" Then thirty persons are killed or wounded. But then also the people begin to fight in earnest; they kill several,

\* *Battoir*, a piece of wood, somewhat like a bat, used by washerwomen for beating linen.—C. C.

and take twenty-two prisoners. All the French communes, Orange, Bagnols, Pont-Saint-Esprit, hasten to assist Avignon, and save the prisoners. They receive them from the hands of the conquerors, and undertake to guard them.

On the 11th of June, they deface the arms of Rome, and those of France are set up in their place. Avignon sends a deputation to the bar of the National Assembly, and bestows itself on its real country, pronouncing these magnificent words, the testament of Roman genius : "Frenchmen, rule over the world."

Let us enter further into the causes, and complete and explain more clearly this rapid drama.

To make a religious war, people must be religious. The clergy were not sufficiently believers to fanaticise the people.

Neither were they very great politicians. That very year, 1790, when they stood so much in need of the people, whom they bribed on all sides, they still exacted from them the tithes abolished by the Assembly. In several places, insurrections took place against them, especially in the north, on account of those unfortunate tithes which they would not abandon.

That aristocratical clergy, without any comprehension of moral powers, thought that a little money, wine, the influence of the climate, and a single spark, would be sufficient. They ought to have been aware that to rekindle fanaticism, it required time, patience, secrecy, a country less observed, far from the high roads and larger cities. Most certainly, they might thus create a lasting agitation in the Bocage of La Vendée ; but to act in the open day, before the anxious eyes of the Protestants, and in the neighbourhood of the great centres of civilisation, like Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Montpellier, who saw everything, and were able, at the slightest spark, to run and stamp out the fire, was a childish attempt.

Froment did all he could. He showed much audacity and decision ; and he was abandoned.\*

\* Froment escaped being massacred. However little disposed we may be in favour of the man and his party, it is impossible not to feel interested in his strange destiny. First, honoured, ennobled, and loaded with presents by the Count d'Artois, and the emigrants ; then, in 1816, abandoned and disowned ! The pamphlets which he then published, the proceedings of an old servant against

He began at the right moment, seeing that the affair at Avignon was about to spoil that of Nîmes, not over-calculating his chances, but, like a brave man, trying to believe that the dubious parties who till then had not dared to declare in his favour, would at length make up their minds when they saw him engaged ; and that they could not calmly see him annihilated.

The municipality ; in other words, the Catholic citizen-class, was prudent ; it durst not call upon the commandant of the province.

The nobility was prudent. The commandant, and the officers in general were unwilling to act without the proper and legal requisition of the municipality.

It was not that the officers were wanting in courage ; but they were not sure of the soldiers. At the first extra-legal order, they might answer with their guns. And to give this first order, and make this dangerous experiment, it was necessary to have made, beforehand, a sacrifice of one's life. But to what idea, what faith ? The majority of the nobility, though Royalists and Aristocrats, were not the less imbued with philosophical and Voltairian ideas, that is to say, in any one respect, gained over to the new spirit.

The Revolution, growing more and more harmonised and in unison, appears every day more plainly what it is, a religion. And the Counter-Revolution, dissenting and discordant, attests the old faith in vain ; it is not a religion.

It has no unity, no fixed principle. Its opposition is wavering, tending several ways at once. It staggers, like a drunken man, to the right and left. The king is for the clergy, and he refuses to support the ecclesiastical protest. The clergy pay and arm the people, and yet exact tithes of them. The nobility and officers wait for orders from Turin, and at the same time those of the Revolutionary authorities.

an ungrateful and heartless master, have been everywhere carefully destroyed. Shall I add that this master went so far as to deprive him, after the law suit, of the miserable petty pension which he enjoyed ? and that, after thirty years' gratuitous service, resolved that the man, ruined, worn out, and in debt on his account, should die in the street. Froment's pamphlets would deserve to be re-printed ; so also would the "Memoirs of Vauban," the emigrant, now become so scarce ; and M. Merilhou's very clever defence in favour of Froment (1823).

One thing is wanting in them all to render their action simple and strong ; a thing that abounds in the other party—faith !

The other party is France ; it has faith in the new faith, in the legitimate authority, the Assembly, the true voice of the nation.

On that side, everything is effulgent with light ; on the other, everything is equivocal, all uncertainty, and darkness.

Why should there be any hesitation ? All together, the soldier and the citizen, joining hands, will henceforth march with a firm step, and under the self-same flag. From April to June, almost all the regiments fraternize with the people. In Corsica, at Caen, Brest, Montpellier, Valence, as at Montauban and Nîmes, the soldier declares for the people and the law. The few officers who resist are killed, and on them are found the proofs of their intelligence with the emigrants. As for the latter, the people are ready to receive them. The cities of the South do not slumber ; Briançon, Montpellier, Valence, and lastly, great Marseilles, are willing to guard themselves ; they seize on their citadels and fill them with their citizens. Now, let the emigrants and foreigners come, if they will !

One France, one faith, one oath ! Here no doubtful man must remain. If you wish to remain wavering, depart from the land of loyalty, pass the Rhine, and cross over the Alps.

The king himself plainly perceives that his best sword, Bouillé, would at length find himself alone, if he did not take the oath like the others. The enemy of the confederations, who had placed himself between the army and the people, is obliged to yield. People and soldiers, united in heart, are all present at that grand spectacle ; even the inflexible is now obliged to give way ; the king orders, and he obeys. He advances between them, sad and moody, and on his sword, devoted to royalty, takes the oath of fidelity to the Revolution.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE NEW PRINCIPLE.—SPONTANEOUS ORGANISATION OF FRANCE (JULY '89, TO JULY '90).

The Law everywhere anticipated by spontaneous Action.—Obscurity and Confusion of the Ancient System.—The New Order creates itself.—The New Powers are brought into life by the Impulse of Deliverance and Defence.—Interior and Exterior Associations which prepare the Municipalities and the Departments.—The Assembly creates Thirteen Hundred Thousand Magistrates, Departmental, Municipal, and Judicial.—Education of the People by Public Functionaries.

I HAVE related fully the resistance offered by the old principle,—the parliaments, the nobility, and the clergy; and I am now going to expound, in a few words, the new principle, and state briefly the immense fact, by which their resistance was confounded and annihilated. The fact, admirably simple in its infinite variety, is *the spontaneous*  
 ✦ *organisation of France.*

That is history, the real, the positive, and the durable; and the rest is nonentity.

It was, however, necessary to detail this nonentity at full length. Evil, precisely because it is nothing but an exception, an irregularity, requires, in order to be understood, a minute narration of particulars. Good, on the contrary, the natural, which springs forth of itself, is almost known to us beforehand by its conformity to the laws of our nature, by the eternal image of good which we possess within us.

The sources whence we derive history have preciously preserved the least worthy of preservation,—the negative accidental element, the individual anecdote, this or that petty intrigue or act of violence.

The great national facts, in which France has acted in concord, have been accomplished by immense, invincible, and, for that very reason, by no means violent, powers. They have excited less attention, and passed almost unperceived.

All that we are furnished with on these general facts, are

the laws, which are derived from them, and have become their last expression. People are never tired of the discussion of the laws, and earnestly repeating the language of the Assemblies. But, as for the great and social movements which brought about those laws, which were their origin, the reason and necessity of their existence, there is scarcely a single line to recall them to our minds.

And yet this is the great climax to which everything else in this miraculous year from one July to the other tends: the law is everywhere forestalled by the spontaneous working of life and action,—an action which, among a few particular disturbances, contains nevertheless the new order of things and realises beforehand the law which will presently be made. The Assembly believes it is leading, but it follows; it is the recorder of France; what France does, it registers, more or less exactly, reduces it to a formula, and writes under her dictation.

Let the scribes come here and learn; let them quit, for a moment, their den, the *Bulletin des Lois*, and throw aside those huge piles of stamped paper which have screened them from nature. If France could have been saved only by their pens and paper, she would have perished a hundred times.

Serious and infinitely interesting is the moment when nature recovers in time not to perish, when life, in presence of danger, follows instinct, its best guide, and finds therein its salvation.

A worn-out society, in this crisis of resurrection, affords us a spectacle of the origin of things. The civilians were musing over the cradle of infant nations. Wherefore muse? You have it before you.

Yes, it is the cradle of France that we now behold. May God protect that cradle! May He save and sustain it upon that great and boundless ocean where I tremble to behold it floating, upon the ocean of futurity!

France was born and started into life at the sound of the cannon of the Bastille. In one day, without any preparation or previous understanding, the whole of France, both cities and villages, were organised at the same time. ✓

The same thing happens in every locality: the people go to the communal house, take the keys and assume the power in the name of the nation. The electors (everybody was an

elector in 1789) form committees, like that of Paris, which will presently produce the regular municipalities.

The governors and administrators of cities (like those of the State) eschevins, notables, and others, withdraw and skulk away by the back door, bequeathing to the commune they had administered, debts as a souvenir.

The financial Bastille, which the oligarchy of notables had concealed so well from every eye, the administrative den, appears in broad daylight ; \* the shapeless instruments of that equivocal *régime*, the confusion of papers, the learned obscurity of calculations, are all brought to light.

The first cry of that liberty (which they call the spirit of disorder) is, on the contrary, order and justice.

Order, in broad daylight. France said to God, like Ajax : " Let me rather die in the light of heaven ! "

What was most tyrannical in the old tyrannical system, was its obscurity : obscurity between the king and the people, between the city authorities and the town, and a no less profound obscurity between the land-proprietor and the tenant. What was a man bound in his conscience to pay to the State, to the Commune, and to the lord of the manor ? Nobody could say. Most people paid what they were unable even to read. The utter ignorance in which the clergy, the privileged teachers of the people, had kept them, abandoned them blind and defenceless to those horrible cormorants, the limbs of the law. Every year, their stamped papers returned, still more blotted and scribbled, with additional expenses, for the horror of the peasant. These mysterious and unknown extra-charges, whether understood or not, he was obliged to pay ; but they remained stored up in his heart, as a treasure of vengeance, for which he should require an indemnity. In 1789, several persons stated that, in forty years, they had paid, with these extra-charges, more than the estates, of which they were then proprietors, were really worth.

In our rural districts, no damage was done to property except in the name of property. The peasant interpreted it in his own manner ; but he never raised any doubt as to the idea of

\* See, in Leber, the shameful picture of this ancient municipal administration, the gratifications exacted by the eschevins, &c. &c. Lyons was twenty-nine millions in debt !

this right. The rural labourer knows what it is to acquire ; the acquisition that he makes or sees made every day, by labour, inspires him with a sort of religious respect for property.

It was in the name of property, long violated and perverted by the agents of the lords of the manor, that the peasants erected those protest on which they suspended the insignia of feudal and fiscal tyranny, the weathercocks of castles, the measures of raising rents unjustly, and the sieves which sifted the corn all to the advantage of the lord, and left only the refuse.

The committees of July 1789 (the origin of the municipalities of 1790) were, for the towns especially, the insurrection of *liberty*,—and for the villages that of property : I mean the most sacred property—man's *labour*.

The village associations were societies for protection,—first, against the legal agents ; and secondly, against the brigands,—two words often synonymous.

They confederated against the stewards, collectors, managers, attorneys, and bailiffs,—against that horrible scrawl, which, by some magic process, had parched up the land, destroyed the cattle, and worn the peasant to the bone, reducing him to a skeleton.

They confederated also against those troops of pillagers, who were overrunning France, people starving for want of work, beggars turned thieves, who, at night, cut down the corn, even when unripe, thus destroying hope. If the villages had not taken up arms, a horrible famine must have been the result, a season like the year 1000 and several of the middle ages. Those wandering bands, difficult to seize, and everywhere expected, and which fear caused to appear everywhere present, filled with dismay our rural population, then less military than at the present day.

All the villages armed, and promised each other mutual protection. They agreed among themselves to unite, in case of alarm, at a given spot, in a central position, or one commanding the principal passage by land or by water.

One fact will serve to elucidate this subject. It reminds us, in some respects, of the panic at Saint-Jean-du-Gard, which I have already related.

Early one morning in summer, the inhabitants of Chavignon (Aisne) beheld, not without trepidation, their street full of armed men. They perceived, however, that, luckily, they were their neighbours and friends, the national guards of all the adjacent communes, who, under false alarm, had marched all night to come to defend them against the *brigands*. They had expected a fight, but they found a feast. All the inhabitants of Chavignon, overjoyed, went forth from their houses to welcome their friends. The women brought out and shared in common all the provisions they had ; and casks of wine were opened. In the public square they displayed the flag of Chavignon, on which are delineated grapes and corn with a naked sword,—a device that summed up very correctly the idea of the day : abundance and security, liberty, fidelity, and concord. The captain-general of the national guards that had come, made a very affecting speech on the eagerness of the communes to come to the defence of their brethren : “ At the first word,” said he, “ we quitted our wives and children in tears ; we left our ploughs and implements in the fields, and marched, without taking even the time to dress ourselves properly.”

The inhabitants of Chavignon, in an address to the National Assembly, relate every circumstance, as a child would to its mother, and, full of gratitude, add this word from the heart : “ What men, gentlemen, what men they have become, since you gave them a native land ! ”

These spontaneous expeditions were thus made, like family parties, with the curate marching at their head. At that of Chavignon, four of the communes that came were accompanied by their curates.

In certain countries, for instance in the Upper-Saône, the curates not only associated in these movements, but formed their centre, and were their leaders and directors. As early as the 27th of September, 1789, the rural communes, in the environs of Luxeuil, confederated under the direction of the curate of Saint Sauveur, and to him all the mayors took the oath.

At Issy-l'Évêque (also in Upper-Saône) there happened a more extraordinary fact. In the general annihilation of every kind of public authority, and seeing no longer any magistrate,



a valiant *curé* assumed himself all the different powers : he enacted ordinances, re-judged law suits already tried, sent for the mayors of the neighbourhood, and promulgated in their presence the new laws which he gave to the country ; then, arming himself, he marched forth, sword in hand, to set about sharing all the land into equal portions. It was necessary to check his zeal and remind him that there was still a National Assembly.

This is uncommon and remarkable. The movement in general was regular, and took place with more order than could have been expected under such circumstances. Though without laws, everybody obeyed a law,—that of preservation and safety.

Before the municipalities are organised, each village governs, guards, and defends itself, as an armed association of inhabitants of the same place.

Before there are any *arrondissements* and departments created by the law, common necessities, especially that of making the roads safe and transporting provisions, form associations between villages and villages, towns and cities, great confederations for mutual protection.

We feel inclined to thank those dangers when we see how they force men to emerge from their isolated position, snatch them from their egotism, accustom them to feel themselves live in others, and awaken in their souls, that had remained dormant for so many centuries, the first spark of fraternity.

The law comes to acknowledge, authorise, and crown all this ; but it does not produce it.

The creation of municipalities, and the concentrating into their hands even non-communal powers (contributions, superior police, the power of disposing of the military, &c.)—this concentration with which the Assembly has been reproached, was not the effect of a system, but the mere acknowledgment of a fact. In the annihilation of the most part of the different powers, and in the involuntary (and often perfidious) inaction of those remaining, the instinct of preservation had effected what it invariably performs : the interested parties had themselves taken their affairs in hand. And who is not interested in such a crisis ? Even he who has no property, *who has nothing*, as people say, possesses, nevertheless,



what is far dearer than any property,—a wife and children to defend.

The new municipal law created *twelve hundred thousand* municipal magistrates ; and the judiciary organisation *a hundred thousand* judges (of whom five thousand were *juges-de-paix*, and eighty thousand assessors of *juges-de-paix*). All these were chosen among the four million two hundred and ninety-eight thousand primary electors\* (who, as proprietors or tenants, paid taxes to the value of three days' labour, or about three francs).

Universal suffrage had given six millions of votes ; I shall explain hereafter this limitation of the electoral right, and the different principles which influenced the Assembly.

It is sufficient here to indicate the prodigious movement that France must then have made, in the spring of 1790, this creation of a multitude of judges and administrators,—*thirteen hundred thousand* at once arising from the election !

It may be said that before the military conscription, France had made a conscription of magistrates. A conscription of peace, order, and fraternity ! What appears predominant here, in the judicial order, is this fine new element, unknown to all ages, the five thousand arbiters or justices of the peace, and their eighty thousand assessors ; and, in the municipal order, it is the dependance in which the military force finds itself with respect to the magistrates of the people.

The municipal power inherited all the ruins of authority. Between the ancient system destroyed, and the new one then inactive, it alone remained standing. The king was disarmed, the army disorganised, every state and parliament demolished, the clergy dismantled, and the nobility about to be erased. The Assembly itself, the great apparent power, ordered rather than acted : it was a head without arms. But it had forty-four

\* This is the number given in 1791 in the *Atlas National de France*, intended for public instruction and dedicated to the Assembly. The Bishop of Autun, in his speech of June 8, 1790, reckons only three millions six hundred thousand active citizens. This small number would be too considerable if it meant only the proprietors, but it includes also those who pay taxes to the value of about three francs as *tenants*. The larger number is the more likely. Both, however, the larger and the smaller are doubtless only approximate.

thousand hands in the municipalities, and it left almost everything to the twelve hundred thousand municipal magistrates.

The immensity of this number was a drawback to action ; but, as an education of the people, as an initiation to public life, it was admirable. Being rapidly renewed, the magistracy would soon exhaust, in many localities, the class from which it was recruited (the four millions of proprietors or tenants who paid three francs taxes). It was necessary (and it was a fine necessity of this grand initiation) to create a new class of proprietors. The peasants of the clergy and the aristocracy, at first excluded from election as clients of the ancient system, would now, as purchasers of the estates set up for sale, find themselves proprietors, electors, municipal magistrates, assessors of justices of the peace, &c. ; and, as such, become the staunchest supporters of the Revolution.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE NEW RELIGION.—CONFEDERATIONS (JULY '89 TO JULY '90).

France in 1798 felt the Impulse of Liberty ; in 1790, she feels the Unity of Patriotism.—The Confederations have removed every Obstacle.—Artificial Barriers fall.—*Procès-verbaux* of the Confederations.—They testify the love of the newly-formed Unity, the Sacrifice of Provincial Feelings and old Habits.—Confederation Fêtes.—Living Symbols.—The Old Man, the Daughter, the Wife, the Mother.—The Child on the Altar of the Native Land.—Divisions of Class, Party, and Religion forgotten.—Man again finds Nature.—He embraces his Country, Humanity, with his whole Heart.—Additions and divers Particulars.

NOTHING of all this existed in the winter of 1789 : there were neither any regular municipalities nor any departments ; no laws, no authority, no public power. Everything, one would think, is about to fall into chaos ; and this is the hope of the aristocracy . . . “ Ah ! you wanted to be free ! Look about you, and enjoy the order you have created.” To this what reply is made by France ? At that formidable crisis, she becomes her own law ; and, without any assistance, springs, with a powerful will, over the chasm between one world and the other,

passes, without stumbling, the narrow bridge over the abyss, without heeding the danger, with her eyes fixed on the goal. She advances courageously through that dark winter, towards the wished-for spring which promises a new light to the world.

What light? It is no longer, as in '89, the vague love of liberty; but a determined object, of a fixed and settled form, which leads the whole nation, transporting and captivating the heart; at every new step, it appears more delightful, and the march is the more rapid. . . . At length the shades of night disappear, the mist is dispelled, and France beholds distinctly what she had loved and followed, without ever having been able to attain it—the unity of the native land.

All that had been believed painful, difficult, and insurmountable, becomes possible and easy. People had asked themselves how the sacrifice of provincial sentiments, reminiscences, and inveterate prejudices, was to be accomplished. “How,” said they, “will Languedoc ever consent to cease to be Languedoc, an interior empire governed by its own laws? How will ancient Toulouse descend from her capitol, her royalty of the South? And do you believe that Brittany will ever give way to France, emerge from her barbarous language and obstinate character? You will sooner see the rocks of Saint-Malo and Penmarck change their nature and become soft.”

But lo! the native land appears to them on the altar, opening her arms and wishing to embrace them. . . . And they all rush towards her and forget themselves, no longer knowing on that day to what province they belong. . . . Like children gone astray, and lost till then, they have at length found a mother; they had been so humble as to imagine themselves Bretons, Provençaux. No, children, know well that you were the sons of France; she herself tells you so; the sons of that great mother, of her who is destined, in equality, to bring forth nations.

Nothing is more grand than to see this people advancing towards the light, without any law, but hand in hand. They advance, but do not act; neither do they feel any necessity of acting; they advance, that is sufficient; the mere sight of that immense movement causes everything to recoil before them; every obstacle vanishes, and all opposition is removed. Who would think of standing up against this pacific and formidable apparition of a great nation in arms?

The confederations of November break up the provincial states ; those of January put an end to the struggle of the parliaments ; those of February put down the riots and pillages ; in March and April, those masses are organised which stifle in May and June the first sparks of a war of religion : May, moreover, witnesses the military confederations, the soldier becoming once more a citizen, and the sword of the counter-revolution, its last weapon, shattered to pieces . . . What remains ? Fraternity has removed every obstacle, all the confederations are about to confederate together, and union tends to unity.—No more confederations ! They are useless, only one now is necessary,—France ; and it appears transfigured in the glory of July.

Is all this a miracle ? Yes, and the greatest and most simple of miracles, a return to nature. The fundamental basis of human nature is sociability. It had required a whole world of inventions against nature to prevent men from living together.

Interior custom-duties, innumerable tolls on roads and rivers, an infinite diversity of laws and regulations, weights, measures, and money, and rivalry carefully encouraged and maintained between cities, countries, and corporations,—all these obstacles, these old ramparts, crumble and fall in a day. Men then behold one another, perceive they are alike, are astonished to have been able to remain so long ignorant of one another, regret the senseless animosity which had separated them for so many centuries, and expiate it by advancing to meet and embrace one another with a mutual effusion of the heart.

This is what rendered so easy and practicable the creation of departments, which had been believed to be entirely impossible. If it had been a mere geometrical conception, emanating from the brain of Sieyès, it would have possessed neither the power nor the durability which we now behold ; it would not have survived the ruin of so many other revolutionary institutions. It was, generally speaking, a natural creation, a legitimate restoration of ancient relations between places and populations, which the artificial institutions of despotism and fiscality had kept divided. The rivers, for instance, which, under the ancient system, were scarcely better than obstacles (twenty-eight tolls on the Loire ! to give only one example), the rivers, I say, became once more what nature intended them to be, the

connecting bond of mankind. They formed and gave their names to the greater number of the departments ; the Seine, the Loire, the Rhone, the Gironde, the Meuse, the Charente, the Allier, the Gard, and others, were like so many natural confederations between the two banks of the rivers, which the state acknowledged, proclaimed, and consecrated.

Most of the confederations have themselves related their own history. They wrote it to their parent, the National Assembly, faithfully and naturally, in a form often rustic and inexperienced; they spoke as they could ; whoever knew how to write, wrote. It was not always possible to find in the rural districts a skilful scribe worthy of consigning such things to posterity. But good-will supplied the deficiency . . . Ye venerable monuments of youthful fraternity, shapeless, but spontaneous and inspired acts of France, you will remain for ever as witnesses of the hearts of our fathers, and of their transports, when they beheld for the first time the thrice blessed face of their native land !

I have found all that entire and glowing, as though made yesterday, when, sixty years afterwards, I lately opened those papers, which few persons had read. At the first I perused, I was overcome with respect ; I perceived a singular, unparalleled fact, on which it is impossible to be mistaken : these enthusiastic documents addressed to the country (represented by the Assembly) are love-letters !

There is nothing official or constrained ; it is evidently the language of the heart. The only art, rhetoric, or declamation that appears therein, is precisely the absence of art, the embarrassment of a youth who knows not how to express the most sincere sentiments, who employs the language of romance, for want of better, to confess his true passion.

But, from time to time, a word springing from the heart, protests against this being styled impotency of language, and causes us to perceive the real depth of the sentiment. . . And then the style is very verbose ; for how, in such a moment, is it possible to say enough ; or how ever to feel satisfied ? . . The material details likewise gave them much solicitude: no writing seemed handsome enough, no paper elegant enough, not to mention the sumptuous little tri-coloured ribbons to tie the papers with. When I saw them first, still gay and but little faded, they reminded me of what Rousseau says of the extraordinary



care he took to write, embellish, and adorn, the manuscript of his "Julia." Such were also the thoughts, and such the care and solicitude of our fathers, when, from transient and imperfect objects, their love aspired to eternal beauty !

What affected me, and filled me with emotion and admiration, is, that in so great a variety of men, characters, and localities, with so many divers elements, which, for the most part, were but yesterday strangers, nay, frequently hostile to one another, there is nothing but what breathes the pure love of unity.

Where, then, are the old distinctions of provinces and races of men ? Where those powerful and geographical contrasts ? All have disappeared : geography itself is annihilated. There are no longer any mountains, rivers, or barriers between men. Their language is still dissimilar, but their words agree so well that they all seem to spring from the same place,—from the same bosom. Everything has gravitated towards one point, and that point now speaks forth ; it is a unanimous prayer from the heart of France.

Such is the power of love. To attain unity, nothing was able to prove an impediment, no sacrifice was considered too dear. All at once, and without even perceiving it, they have forgotten the things for which they would have sacrificed their lives the day before, their provincial sentiment, local tradition, and legends. Time and space, those material conditions to which life is subject, are no more. A strange *vita nuova*, one eminently spiritual, and making her whole Revolution a sort of dream, at one time delightful, at another terrible, is now beginning for France. It knew neither time nor space.

And yet it was antiquity, with its old habits, familiar objects, customary signs, and revered symbols, that had hitherto constituted life. All that now grows faint, or disappears. What remains, for instance, the ceremonies of the old religion, now called to consecrate these new festivals, is felt to be only an accessory. In those immense assemblies wherein people of every class and every communion have but one and the self-same heart, there is something more sacred than an altar. No special form of worship can confer holiness on the most holy of holy things,—man fraternising in the presence of God.

All the old emblems grow pale, and the new ones that are



essayed have but little signification. Whether people swear on the old altar, before the Holy Sacrament, or take the oath before the cold image of abstract liberty, the true symbol is elsewhere.

The beauty, the grandeur, the eternal charm of those festivals, is that the symbol is a living one.

This symbol for man is man. All the conventional world crumbling to pieces, a holy respect possesses him for the true image of God. He does not mistake himself for God : he has no vain pride. It is not as a ruler or a conqueror, but in far more affecting and serious attributes that man appears here. The noble harmonious sentiments of family, nature, and native land, are sufficient to fill these festivals with a religious, pathetic interest.

The president at first is some old man : the old man surrounded with children, has the whole nation for his family. He is conducted and escorted back with music. At the great confederation of Rouen, where the national guards of sixty different towns attended, they brought from the remote Andelis, a venerable knight of Malta, eighty-five years of age, to preside over the Assembly. At Saint-Andéol, the honour of taking the oath at the head of all the people was conferred on two patriarchs, one ninety-three, and the other ninety-four,—one a noble and the colonel of the National Guard, the other a private labourer ; they embraced at the altar, thanking heaven that they had lived to see that day. The people were full of emotion, believing they beheld in those venerable men the everlasting reconciliation of classes. They rushed into each other's arms, and joining hands, an immense farandole, comprising everybody, without exception, spread throughout the town, into the fields, across the mountains of Ardèche, and towards the meadows of the Rhone ; the wine flowed in the streets, tables were spread, provisions placed in common, and all the people are together in the evening, solemnising this love-feast, and praising God.

There was everywhere an old man at the head of the people, sitting in the first place, and presiding over the crowd, and around him were girls, like a garland of flowers. In all these solemnities, this lovely band marches dressed in white with sashes *à la nation* (that is to say, tri-coloured). Here, one of

them pronounces a few noble charming sentences, which will create heroes to-morrow. Elsewhere (in the civic procession of Romans in Dauphiné), a beautiful girl marched along, bearing in her hand a palm with this superscription: *To the best citizen!* . . . Many returned from that procession lost in thought.

Dauphiné, the serious and valiant province which opened the Revolution, made numerous confederations of the whole province, and of the towns and villages. The rural communes of the frontier nearest to Savoy, close to the emigrants, and tilling the ground in the neighbourhood of their guns, did but have still finer festivals. They had a battalion of children, another of women, and another of maidens, all armed. At Maubec they filed along in good order, headed by a banner, bearing and handling their naked swords with that graceful skill peculiar to the women of France.

I have related elsewhere \* the heroic example of the women and maidens of Angers. They wanted to depart and follow the young army of Anjou and Brittany marching for Rennes, to take their share in that first crusade of liberty, to feed the combatants, and take care of the wounded. They swore they would never marry any but loyal citizens, love only the valiant, and associate for life only with those who devoted theirs to France.

They thus inspired the enthusiasm of 1788. And now in the confederations of June and July, 1790, after the removal of so many obstacles, none were more affected in these festivals of victory; for, during the winter, in the complete absence of all public protection, what dangers had not the family incurred! They embraced the hope of safety, and found comfort in those immense assemblies. Their poor hearts were however still very full of the past, and of what the future might bring forth? But they wished for no other future than the salvation of their country! They evinced, as we may perceive in every written document, more enthusiasm and fervour than even the men, and a greater impatience to take the civic oath.

Women are kept back from public life; and people are too apt to forget that they really have more right to it than any.

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The stake they venture is very different from ours ; man plays only his life ; but woman stakes her child. She is far more interested in acquiring information and foresight. In the solitary sedentary life which most women lead, they follow, in their anxious musings, the critical events of their country, and the movements of the armies. The mind of this woman, whom you believe to be entirely occupied with her household duties, is wandering in Algeria, sharing all the privations and marches of our young soldiers in Africa, and suffering and fighting with them. But, whether called or not, they took the most active part in the *fêtes* of the confederations. In some village or other, the men had assembled alone in a large building, to make a common address to the National Assembly. The women draw near, listen, enter, and, with tears in their eyes, entreat to be allowed to join them. Then, the address is read to them, and they agree to it heartily. This affecting union of the family and the country filled every heart with an unknown sentiment. The *fête*, though quite accidental, was but the more touching on that account. It was short, like all human happiness, and lasted but one day. The account of the proceedings ends with a natural expression of melancholy and musing : " Thus passed away the happiest moment of our lives."

The reason was, they had to work on the morrow and rise early ; for it was harvest time. The confederates of Etoile, near Valence, express themselves in words to this effect, after having mentioned their fire-works and farandoles : " We who, on the 29th of November, 1789, gave France the example of the first confederation, have been able to devote to this festivity only one day ; and we withdrew in the evening to rest ourselves in order to resume our labours on the morrow ; for the labours of the field are urgent, and we are sorry for it." . . . Good husbandmen ! They write all that to the National Assembly, convinced that it is thinking of them, and that, like God, it beholds and performs everything !

These memorials of rural communes are so many wild flowers that seem to have sprung up in the midst of the harvest. In reading them we seem to inhale the strong and vivifying perfume of the country at that glowing season of fecundity. It is like walking among the ripe corn.

And in fact it was in the open country that all this took

place No temple would have sufficed. The whole population went forth, every man, woman, and child ; and with them they transported the old in their chairs, and infants in their cradles ; whilst villages and whole towns were left in the custody of public faith. A few patrols, who cross through a town, depose that they saw nothing on their way but dogs. Any one who, on the 14th of July, 1790, had passed through those deserted villages, at noon, without seeing the country, would have taken them for Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Nobody was able to absent himself from the festival, for no one was a mere spectator ; all were actors, from the centenarian to the new-born infant ; and the latter more so than any.

He was carried like a living flower among the flowers of the harvest, offered by his mother, and laid upon the altar. But it was not the passive part of an offering alone that he had to perform ; he was active also ; he was accounted a person ; took his civic oath by the lips of his mother ; claimed his dignity as a man and a Frenchman ; was put at once in possession of his native land, and received his share of hope.

Yes, the child, the future generation, was the principal actor. At a festival in Dauphiné, the commune itself is crowned, in the person of its principal magistrate, by a young child. Such a hand brings good fortune. These youths, whom I now behold under the anxious eye of their mother, will, in two years' time, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, depart in arms, full of military enthusiasm ; the year '92 will have summoned them, and they will follow their elders to Jemmapes. These again, still younger, whose arms appear so feeble, are the future soldiers of Austerlitz. Their hand has brought good fortune ; they have accomplished the good omen, and crowned their native land ; and even to-day, though feeble and pale, France still wears that eternal crown, and overawes nations.

How great and happy the generation born amidst such things, and whose first gaze was gladdened by that sublime spectacle ! Children brought and blessed at the altar of their native land, devoted by their weeping, but resigned and heroic mothers, and bestowed by them on France. Oh ! those who are thus born can never die. You received on that day the cup of immortality. Even those among you whom history has not mentioned, nevertheless fill the world with your nameless

living spirit, with that great unanimous idea which, sword in hand, they extended throughout the world.

I do not believe that the heart of man was at any period more teeming with a vast and comprehensive affection, or that the distinctions of classes, fortunes, and parties, were ever so much forgotten. In the villages, especially, there are no longer either rich or poor, nobles or plebeians; there is but one general table, and provisions are in common; social dissensions and quarrels have disappeared; enemies become reconciled; and opposite sects, believers and philosophers, Protestants and Catholics, fraternise together.

At Saint-Jean-du-Gard, near Alais, the Catholic curate and the Protestant minister embraced at the altar. The Catholics led the Protestants to church, and the minister was made to sit in the first place in the choir. Similar honours were done by the Protestants to the curate, who, seated among them in the most honourable place, listened to the minister's sermon. The religions fraternise on their old battle-field, at the entrance to the Cévennes, upon the tombs of their ancestors who killed one another, and on the still warm ashes of the faggots. God, so long accused, was at length justified. All hearts overflowed with love; prose was not sufficient; a burst of poetry could alone express so profound a sentiment. The curate composed and chanted a hymn to liberty; the mayor replied in stanzas. and his wife, a respectable mother of a family, at the moment when she presented her children at the altar, poured forth the feelings of her heart in a few pathetic verses.

The open air, the fields, and the immense valleys, where these festivals were generally held, seemed to contribute to this effusion of the heart. Man had not only reconquered his rights, but he had re-entered upon his possession of nature. Several of these writings testify the emotion which those poor people felt on beholding their country for the first time. Strange to relate! those rivers, mountains, and noble landscapes, where they were constantly passing, were discovered by them on that day: they had never seen them before.

An instinct of nature, the natural inspiration of the genius of the country, often caused them to choose for the scene of these festivals the very places which had been preferred by our ancient Gauls, the Druids. The islands held sacred by the



ancestors, became sacred also for their posterity. In the departments of Gard, Charente, and elsewhere, the altar was erected on an island. That of Angoulême received the representatives of sixty thousand men ; and there were, perhaps, as many upon the admirable amphitheatre on which this town is situated, above the river. In the evening, there was a banquet in the illuminated island, with a whole people for guests and spectators, from the top to the bottom of that gigantic coliseum.

At Maubec (in the department of Isère), where many rural communes assembled, the altar was erected in the middle of an immense plain, opposite to an ancient monastery, with a magnificent view, an unbounded horizon, and the reminiscence of Rousseau, who had lived there some time ! In a speech glowing with enthusiasm, a priest extolled the glorious memory of the philosopher, who, in that very place, had mused and prepared that great day. In conclusion, he pointed to heaven, and called to witness the sun, then bursting from the clouds, as though to enjoy also that sublime and affecting spectacle.

We, worshippers of the future, who put our faith in hope, and look towards the east ; we, whom the disfigured and perverted past, daily becoming more impossible, has banished from every temple ; we who, by its monopoly, are deprived of temple and altar, and often feel sad in the isolated communion of our thoughts ; we had a temple on that day,—such a temple as had never existed before ! No artificial church, but the universal church ; from the Vosges to the Cévennes, and from the Alps to the Pyrenees.

No conventional symbol ! All nature, all mind, all truth !

Man who, in our old churches, never saw his fellows face to face, saw them here,—saw himself for the first time, and from the eyes of a whole people received a spark of God.

He perceived nature, seized it again, and found it still sacred : for in it he perceived his God.

And he called that people and that country by the name he had found,—Native Land. And however large this Patria may be, he enlarges his heart so as to embrace it all. He beholds it with the eyes of the mind, and clasps it with the longings of desire.

Ye mountains of our native land, which bound our sight, but not our thoughts, be witness that if we do not elasp in one



brotherly embrace the great family of France, it is already contained in our hearts. . .

Ye sacred rivers, ye holy islands, where our altar was erected, may your waters, murmuring beneath the current of the spirit, go and proclaim to every sea and every nation, that, to-day, at the solemn banquet of liberty, we would not have broken bread, without having invited them, and that on this day of happiness, all humanity was present in the soul and wishes of France !

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“ Thus ended the happiest day of our life.” This sentence, which the members of a village confederation wrote, at the end of their memorial, on the evening of their festival, I was very near writing myself in concluding this chapter. It is ended, and nothing like it is in store for me. I leave here an irreparable moment of my life, a part of myself, which, I plainly feel, will remain here and accompany me no more : I seem to depart poor and needy. How many things that I wished to add, I have been obliged to sacrifice ! I have not indulged in a single note ; the least would have caused an interruption, and have been perhaps discordant, at this sacred moment. And yet it would have been necessary to give several ; a number of interesting particulars presented themselves, and ought to have been inserted. Several of those memorials deserved to be printed entire (those of the Romans, Maubec, Teste-de-Buche, Saint-Jean-du-Gard, &c.). The speeches are less valuable than the memorials ; yet many of these are affecting ; the text that recurs the most frequently, is that of the patriarch Simeon : “ Now I may die.” See among others the *procès-verbal* of Regnianwez (Renwez ?) near Rocroi.

Each document taken singly is weak ; but the whole possesses an extraordinary charm : *the greatest diversity* (provincial, local, urban, rural, &c.) *in the most perfect unity*. Each country performs this great act of unity with its special originality. The *fédérés* of Quimper crown themselves with the oak-leaves of Brittany ; the inhabitants of Romans (in Dauphiné), on the confines of the South, place a palm in the hand of the handsome maiden who leads the procession. A courageous

serenity, order, common sense, and a good heart, are very conspicuous in these confederations of Dauphiné.

In those of Brittany, there is a character of strength, of impassioned gravity, a seriousness allied to the tragical; they feel that this is not child's play, and that they are in presence of the enemy. In the mountains of Jura, in the country of the last of the serfs, the character is that of amazement, the delight of deliverance, on beholding themselves exalted from slavery to liberty, "more than free, citizens! Frenchmen! superior to all Europe." They founded an anniversary of the sacred night of the 4th of August.

What is extremely affecting is the prodigious effort of good will made by this people, so little prepared, to express the deep feeling that entirely filled their hearts. The inhabitants of Navarreins, in the Pyrenees, poor people, as they themselves say, lost in their mountains, devoid of every resource, not having even a community of language, lisp the French of the north, and offer to their country their hearts, their very impotency. One of the most clownish memorials (who would believe it?) is that of a commune near Versailles and Saint-Germain. The rough common paper betokens extreme poverty, and the writing an utterly barbarous ignorance: most of these memorialists can make only a cross for their signatures; but yet they all sign one way or other; no one seems willing to be dispensed from signing; after the mother's name, you see the child's, the grand-daughter's, &c.

Their chief study, in general, in which they do not always happily succeed, is to find out visible signs,—symbols,—to express their new faith. At Dôle, the sacred fire, with which the priest was to burn incense on the altar of the country, was, by means of a burning-glass, extracted from the sun by the hand of a young maiden.

At Saint-Pierre (near Crépy), at Mello (Oise), and at Saint Maurice (Charente), they placed the law itself and the decrees of the Assembly upon the altar; at Mello, it was carried thither in an arch of alliance. At Saint Maurice, it was laid upon a map of the world which served to carpet the altar, and placed with the sword, the plough, and the scales, between two cannon-balls of the Bastille.

In other places, a happier inspiration leads them to choose

entirely human symbols of union ; marriages celebrated at the altar of the country, baptisms, or the adoption of children by communes or clubs. Often also, the women go to perform a funeral service for those who had been killed at the taking of the Bastille. Add to this immense sums given in charity, and distributions of provisions ; or, far better than charity, provisions placed in common, and tables laid for everybody. The most touching proof of goodness of heart that I have met with, is a subscription (at Pleyssade, near Bergerac) raised by a few soldiers among themselves, amounting to the enormous sum (relatively to the means of these poor people) of one hundred and twenty francs ! for a widow of a man killed at the Bastille ! At Saint-Jean-du-Gard, the ceremony ends “with a solemn reconciliation of those who had quarrelled.” At Lous-le-Saulnier, they drank to “All men, even our enemies, whom we swear to love and defend ! ”

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE NEW RELIGION.—GENERAL CONFEDERATION (JULY 14, 1790).

The Amazement and Emotion of all Nations at the Spectacle afforded by France.—Great Confederation of Lyons (May 30th, 1790). France demands a General Confederation (June).—The Song of the Confederates.—Paris prepares for them the *Champ-de-Mars*.—The Assembly abolishes Hereditary Nobility (June 19th).—It had already abolished the Christian Principle of the Inheritance of Crime.—It receives the *Deputies of the Human Race*.—Confederation of Kings against that of the People.—General Confederation of France at Paris (July 14th, 1790).—The impulse of France, at once pacific and warlike.

THIS faith, this candour, this immense impulse of concord, after a whole century of dispute, was a subject of great astonishment for every nation ; it was like a wonderful dream ; and they all remained dumb and affected.

Several of our confederations had imagined a touching symbol of union, that of celebrating marriages at the altar of the native land. Confederation itself, a union of France with

France, seemed a prophetic symbol of the future alliance of nations, of the general marriage of the world.

Another symbol, no less affecting, appeared at these festivals. Occasionally they placed upon the altar a little child whom everybody adopted, and who, endowed with the gifts, the prayers, the tears of the whole assembly, became the relation of everybody.

That child upon the altar is France, with all the world surrounding her. In her, the common child of nations, they all feel themselves united, and all participating heartily in her future destiny, are anxiously praying around her, full of fear and hope. . . . Not one of them beholds her without weeping.

How Italy wept! and Poland! and Ireland! (Ah! sister sufferers, remember that day for ever!) . . . Every oppressed nation, unmindful of its slavery at the sight of infant liberty, exclaimed: "In thee I am free!"\*

In presence of that miracle, Germany remained lost in thought,—in an ecstatic revery. Klopstock was at prayers; and the author of "Faust," unable any longer to maintain the part of sceptical irony, found himself on the point of being converted to faith.

In a remote region of the northern seas, there then existed an extraordinary, powerful creature, a man, or rather a system, a living monument of scholastic science, callous and impenetrable,—a rock formed by adamant in the granite of the Baltic; on which every religion, every system of philosophy had struck and been shipwrecked. He alone remained immutable, and invulnerable to the outward world. His name was Emmanuel Kant; but he called himself Critic. For sixty years, this perfectly abstract being, devoid of all human connection, had gone out at precisely the same hour, and, without speaking to anybody, had taken precisely the same walk for a stated number of minutes; just as we see in the old town-clocks, a man of iron come forth, strike the hour and then withdraw. Wonderful to relate, the inhabitants of Königsberg (who considered this as an omen of the most extraordinary

\* These sentiments are to be found in a number of truly pathetic addresses, from men of every nation, especially in the ever-memorable address from the Belfast volunteers.

events) saw this planet swerve and depart from its long habitual course. . . . They followed him and saw him hastening towards the west, to the road by which they expected the courier from France !

O humanity ! . . . To behold Kant moved and anxious, going forth on the road, like a woman, to inquire the news, was not that a surprising and wonderful change ? Why, no ; no change at all. That expansive intellect was following its course. What he had, till then, in vain sought for in science, *Spiritual Unity*, he now beheld forming itself by the heart and instinct.

Without any other guidancee, the world seemed to be drawing towards that unity, its true goal, towards which it is ever aspiring. " Ah ! if I were *one*," says the world ; " if I could at length unite my scattered members, and bring my nations together ! " " Ah ! If I were *one*," says man ; " if I could cease to be the complex man that I am, rally my divided powers, and establish concord within me ! " This ever impotent desire both of the world and the human soul, a nation seemed to be realising at that fugitive hour, playing that divine comedy of union and concord which we never behold but in our dreams.

Imagine, therefore, every nation watching attentively, and irresistibly attracted towards France, in heart and soul. And in France, also, behold every road thronged with men, travelling from every corner of the country towards the centre : union is gravitating towards unity.

We have already seen the unions forming, the groups rallying together, and, united, seeking a common centralisation. Each, a little France in itself, has tended towards its own Paris, and sought for it first in its own bosom. A considerable part of France believed, for a moment, it had found it at Lyons (May 30th). There, there was so prodigious a concourse of men, that it required no less than the wide plains of the Rhone to receive them. The whole of the east and the south had sent hither their representatives ; the deputies of the national guard alone amounted to fifty thousand men. Some of them had travelled a hundred leagues, others two hundred, in order to be present. Deputies from Sarre-Louis there shook hands with those of Marseilles. Even a deputation from Corsica

endeavoured to be present ; but, in spite of all their haste, they did not arrive till the morrow.\*

But it was not Lyons that was able to unite all France : it required Paris.

This fact caused great alarm among politicians on either side.

Would it not be risking a fearful riot, pillage, and bloodshed, to bring those undisciplined crowds to Paris, the very centre of agitation ? . . . And what would become of the king ? Such was the language of the terrified royalists.

The king, said the Jacobins, the king will assuredly make an acquisition of all those credulous people coming to us from the provinces. This dangerous union will deaden the public spirit, lull suspicion, and awaken once more their former idolatry : it will *royalize* France.

But neither party was able to prevent it.

The mayor and the commune of Paris, impelled and forced by the example and entreaties of the other towns, were absolutely obliged to go and ask the Assembly for a general confederation ; and the Assembly, whether willing or not, was obliged to grant it. Nevertheless, it did all in its power to reduce the number of those who desired to come. The thing was decided very late, so that those who had to travel on foot from the uttermost parts of the kingdom, would be scarcely able to arrive in time : the expense also was to be defrayed by the several localities,—an obstacle likely to prove insurmountable for the poorer districts.

But how was it possible for obstacles to exist in so great a movement ? People raised subscriptions as well as they could ; and, as far as their means permitted, they equipped those who were to perform the journey : several however came without any uniform. Hospitality was universally and admirably displayed on every road ; the people stopped the pilgrims of that great festival, and disputed the favour of entertaining them. They forced them to halt, to lodge, to eat, or at least to drink on their passage. None were considered strangers : all were

\* I have now before me a splendid article, which, to my extreme regret, I am unable to insert, giving an account of this great Confederation, and written (purposely for me) by an octogenarian, with the most fervent and affecting enthusiasm.—“Oh, what must the flame have been, since the ashes are so warm !”



regarded as relations, and forward they all went, national guards, soldiers, and sailors, marching all together. These bands, as they journeyed through the villages, presented an affecting spectacle. They who were thus invited to Paris were the oldest of the army and navy. Poor soldiers bent double by the Seven Years' War, gray-headed subaltern officers, brave officers of fortune, who had struggled through every hardship, old pilots worn out by tempests,—all these living ruins of the ancient system, had nevertheless determined to come. It was their holiday, their birthday! On the 14th of July, mariners eighty years old were seen marching for twelve hours together; they had recovered their strength, and felt themselves in the hour of death participating in the youthful vigour of France—the eternal spirit of their native land.

And as these bands of patriots tramped through the towns and villages, they chanted with all their might, and with heroic cheerfulness, a song which the inhabitants re-echoed from their thresholds. That song, the most national of all, with its emphatic and powerful rhymes, ever recurring in the self-same tone (like the commandments of God and the church), admirably sustained the weary steps of the traveller by shortening his journey, and the energy of the labourer by showing him the progress of his work. It faithfully kept time with the progress of the Revolution itself, using a more rapid movement when that terrible traveller increased her speed. Abridged, and comprised in a rondo of fury and madness, it became the murderous *Ça ira!* of 1793. That of 1790 was of a very different character:—

Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète :

Ah ! ça ira ! ça ira ! ça ira !

Suivant les maximes de l'Évangile

(Ah ! ça ira ! ça ira ! ça ira !)

Du législateur tout s'accomplira ;

Celui qui s'élève, on l'abaissera ;

Et qui s'abaisse, on l'élèvera, &c.\*

For the traveller who was slowly journeying towards Paris,

\* In these days the people are for ever repeating : Come, this goes bravely, according to the precepts of the Gospel, &c. The law of the Great Legislator will now be fulfilled : he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, &c.

from the Pyrenees or the extremity of Brittany, under the burning sun of July, this song was a viaticum, a support, like the *proses* chanted by the pilgrims who, in a revolutionary spirit, built up the cathedrals of Chartres and Strasbourg, in the middle ages. The Parisian sang it in quick time, and with violent energy, in digging up the Field of Mars, to prepare it for the field of the Confederation. From being a flat plain, it was to assume the fine majestic form which we now behold. The city of Paris had sent thither a few thousand idle workmen who would have required years to execute so great a task. The people saw through this ill-will, and the whole population set to work. It was an extraordinary spectacle, to behold, both day and night, men of every class, and every age, even children, but all citizens,—soldiers, *abbés*, monks, actors, sisters of charity, noble ladies, market-women, all handling the pickaxe, rolling barrows, or driving carts. Children walked in front, bearing torches; perambulating musicians played to enliven the workmen; and they themselves, whilst levelling the earth, continued still to chant their levelling song: “*Ah ça ira! ça ira! ça ira!* He that exalteth himself shall be abased!”

The song, the work, and the workmen, was one and the same thing,—equality in action: the richest and the poorest were all united in work; but the poor, we must say, contributed the most. After their daily labour, it was a heavy task in July that the water-carrier, the carpenter, or the mason of the Bridge Louis XVI., which was then being constructed, had to perform in digging up the Field of Mars. Although it was harvest-time, the labourers did not excuse themselves from attending; but, though worn out and exhausted, repaired thither for recreation, and worked by torch-light.

This truly immense work, which converted a plain into a valley between two hills, was performed (who would believe it?) within a week!—having been begun precisely on the 7th of July and ended before the 14th.

The thing was executed with a hearty good-will, as though it had been a holy war. The authorities had hoped, by their calculated dilatoriness, to impede and prevent the festival of union; it was indeed becoming impossible. France was determined; and the thing was done

Those wished-for guests were now arriving and filling every part of Paris. The inn-keepers and masters of furnished hôtels themselves reduced and fixed the moderate price at which they would receive that crowd of strangers. The majority were not allowed to go to the inns. The Parisians, though lodged, as is well known, in very close quarters, gladly put up with every inconvenience, in order to be able to receive the confederates.

When the Bretons, those eldest born of liberty, arrived, the conquerors of the Bastille advanced to meet them as far as Versailles, even to Saint-Cyr; and, after mutual congratulations and embraces, the two bodies united together, and forming but one, marched back to Paris.

Every heart expanded with an unknown sentiment of peace and concord, as we may judge from a fact, in my opinion, the most conclusive of all: the journalists ceased wrangling. Those fierce antagonists, those anxious guardians of liberty, whose habitual strife so embitters the hearts of men, rose superior to their inveterate habit; the emulation of the ancients, devoid of hatred and jealousy, took possession of their hearts, and, for a moment, dislodged the sad spirit of controversy. Loustalot, the honest and indefatigable author of the *Révolutions de Paris*, and the brilliant, fervent, but inconsistent, Camille Desmoulins, both gave utterance, at the same time, to an affecting and generous though impracticable idea,—*a confederative covenant between writers*: no more opposition and jealousy, no emulation but that for the public welfare.

The Assembly itself seemed gained over by the universal enthusiasm. During a warm debate one evening in June, it felt once more for a moment its inspiration of '89, its young excitement of the 4th of August. A deputy from Franche-Comté said that at a time when the confederates were arriving, they ought to be spared the humiliation of beholding provinces in chains at the feet of Louis XIV. on the *Place des Victoires*, and that those statues ought to be removed. A deputy from the South, taking advantage of the generous emotion which this proposal excited in the Assembly, asked for the abolition of all the pompous titles discordant with the idea of equality,—the names of counts, marquises, armorial bearings, and liveries. This motion, supported by Mont-

moreney and Lafayette, was principally opposed by Maury (the son of a shoemaker, as is well known). The Assembly, without adjourning, abolished hereditary nobility (June 19th, 1790). The most of those who voted, regretted it on the morrow. This relinquishing of names of estates, and returning to family names almost forgotten, put everybody out of his element; Lafayette became an insignificant *M. Mottier*, and Mirabeau was enraged at being nothing more than *M. Riquetti*.

This change was not, however, the effect of chance, a mere caprice; but the natural and necessary application of the very principle of the Revolution. This principle is no other than Justice, which wishes that everybody should be answerable for his own works, whether for good or evil. Whatever your ancestors may have done is set down to your ancestors' account, not to yours. You have to act entirely for yourself! In this system, there can be no transmission of anterior merit, no nobility; but, at the same time, no transmission of previous transgressions. As early as the month of February, the barbarity of our laws condemning two youths to the gallows for forgery, the Assembly decided, on this occasion, that the families of culprits should not be at all disgraced by their execution. The public, touched with the youth and misfortune of these young men, comforted their respectable parents with a thousand proofs of sympathy; and several honourable citizens demanded their sisters in marriage.

*No more transmission of merit; the abolition of nobility. No more transmission of evil; the scaffold no longer degrades the family or the children of the guilty.*

The Jewish and Christian principle reposes precisely on the opposite idea, that crime is transmissible, and merit likewise; that of Christ, or that of the Saints,\* is profitable to the greatest undeservers.

On the day that the Assembly decreed the abolition of nobility, it had received an extraordinary deputation, which styled itself that of the deputies of the human race. A German of the Rhine, Anacharsis Clootz, (a whimsical character, to whom we shall have occasion to revert), presented, at the bar

of the Assembly, a score of men from every nation in their national costumes,—Europeans and Asiatics. He demanded, in their name, to be allowed to take a part in the confederation of the Field of Mars: “in the name of every people, that is to say, of the legitimate sovereigns, everywhere oppressed by kings.”

Some deputies were affected, others laughed. And yet there was something serious in that deputation; it comprised men from Avignon, Liege, Savoy, and Belgium, who really desired at that time to become French; besides refugees from England, Prussia, Holland, and Austria, hostile to their governments, who, at that very moment, were conspiring against France. These refugees seemed a European committee, ready-formed against Europe, the first outline of those foreign legions which Carnot advised at a later period.

In opposition to the confederation of nations was formed one of kings. Indeed, the queen of France had reason to entertain hope, on seeing with what facility her brother Leopold had rallied Europe to Austria. German diplomacy, usually so slow, seemed to have found wings. The reason of this was that diplomatists were entirely left out of the affair, which was arranged personally by the kings themselves, without the knowledge of their ministers and ambassadors. Leopold had applied straight to the king of Prussia, pointed out to him their common danger, and opened a congress, in the very kingdom of Prussia, at Reichenbach, in concert with England and Holland.

A dismal prospect for France: backed only by the powerless good-wishes of nations, and presently besieged by the armies and the malevolence of kings!

Neither did France seem safer at home: the Court gaining over different members of the Assembly every day, and acting no longer by the right side, but even by the left, by the club of '89, by Mirabeau and Sièyes, by corruption in different forms, treachery and intimidation. By these means it carried triumphantly a civil list of twenty-five millions, and for the queen a jointure of four. It obtained also coercive measures against the press, and was even so bold as to prosecute parties for the doings of the 5th and 6th of October.

Such was the state of things that the confederates beheld on



arriving at Paris. Their idolatrous enthusiasm for the Assembly and the king was put to a very severe trial. Most of them had come inspired with a filial sentiment for their good *citizen king*, uniting in their emotion the past and the future,—royalty and liberty; and several, when admitted to an audience, fell upon their knees, and offered him their swords and their hearts . . . The king, timid by nature and by his false equivocal position, found little to say in answer to this warm and cordial expression of youthful emotion; and the queen still less. With the exception of *her faithful Lorrains*, the hereditary subjects of her family, she behaved generally very coolly towards the confederates.

At length arrived the great and long-desired day, the 14th of July, for which these good people had undertaken their arduous journey. Everything was in readiness. Even during the night, for fear of missing the festival, many of the people and the National Guard bivouacked in the Field of Mars. Day light at length appears; but, alas! it rains! And heavy showers, with violent gusts of wind, continued throughout the day. “The weather is aristocratical,” said the people, who took their places all the same; and their courageous persevering good humour seemed willing to avert the ill omen by a thousand mad jokes. One hundred and sixty thousand persons were seated upon the hillocks in the Field of Mars, and one hundred and fifty thousand remained standing; whilst, in the field itself about fifty thousand men, of whom fourteen thousand National Guards from the provinces, those of Paris, the deputies from the army, the navy, and others, were to perform evolutions. The vast eminences of Chaillot and Passy were also crowded with spectators: a magnificent, immense amphitheatre, itself commanded by the more distant circus formed by Montmartre, Saint-Cloud, Meudon, and Sevres; such a place seemed destined to receive the States-General of the world.

But, in spite of all this, it was raining! How slowly the hours seemed to pass in expectation! The confederates and the Parisian National Guards, who had been waiting ever since five in the morning along the boulevards, though drenched with rain, and dying of hunger, were still in good humour. Loaves, hams, and bottles of wine are sent down to them by



ropes from the windows of the Rue Saint-Martin and the Rue Saint-Honoré.

They now arrive, crossing the river over a wooden bridge, built in front of Chaillot, and entering by a triumphal arch. In the middle of the Field of Mars arose the altar of the native land; and in front of the Military School the platforms to receive the king and the Assembly.

Again, all this was very tedious and trying to the patience. The first who arrived, to keep up their spirits in spite of the rain and the bad weather, bravely set to dancing. Their joyous farandoles, spreading further and further, in spite of the mud, form at length vast rondos, each of which is a province, a department, or several distinct races of men mingled together: Brittany is seen dancing with Burgundy, and Flanders with the Pyrenees. We beheld those groups commencing their merry rondos in the winter of '89; and the immense farandole which has gradually formed itself of the whole of France, is now completed and ended at the Field of Mars . . . This is unity!

Farewell to the period of expectation, aspiration, and desire, when everybody dreamed and longed for this day . . . Here it is at last! What do we desire more? Why all this uneasiness? . . . Alas! the experience of the world teaches us this sad fact, so strange to tell, and yet so true, that union too often diminishes in unity. The wish to unite was already the union of hearts, perhaps the very best unity.

But, hush! The king has arrived and is seated; and so is the Assembly, and also the queen in a gallery that commands all the rest. Lafayette and his white horse have now reached the foot of the throne; and the commandant is alighting and receiving the king's orders. Amid two hundred priests, wearing tricoloured sashes, Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, ascends, with a limping equivocal gait, towards the altar: who but he ought to officiate, when the ceremony is to take an oath?

Twelve hundred musicians were playing, but their music was scarcely heard. A dead silence ensues; but the plain is suddenly shaken by the report of forty pieces of cannon. At that clap of thunder, all arise and stretch forth their hands to heaven . . . O king! O people! pause . . . Heaven is listening, and the sun is bursting expressly through the cloud . . . Pay attention to your oaths!

Oh ! how heartily the people swear ! How credulous they still are ! . . . But why does the king not grant them the happiness of seeing him swear at the altar ? Why does he swear under cover, in the shade, and half concealed from the people ? . . . For God's sake, sire, raise your hand so that everybody may see it !

And you, madam, do you feel no compassion for this simple, confiding, credulous people, who were dancing just now so cheerfully, between their melancholy past and their formidable future ? Wherefore that doubtful expression in your handsome blue eyes ? A royalist has noticed it : " Do you see the enchantress ? " exclaimed Count de Virieu . . . Can you then, from this spot, behold your envoy who is even now receiving and congratulating, at Nice, the agent of the massacres in the South ? Or else, do you imagine you perceive, in these crowds of people, the distant armies of Leopold ?

Listen ! This is peace ; but a peace of an entirely warlike character. The three millions of armed men who have deputed these, have among them more soldiers than all the kings of Europe. They offer a brotherly peace, but they are nevertheless quite ready for the fight. Even now several departments, Seine, Charente, Gironde, and many others, are willing to give, arm, and equip, each six thousand men to march to the frontier. Presently, the Marseillais will also demand to march ; and, renewing the oath of the Phocians, their ancestors, will fling a stone into the sea, and swear that, unless they be conquerors, they will not return till the day when that stone shall float upon the waters !

END OF BOOK III.

## BOOK IV.

JULY 1790, TO JULY 1791.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### WHY THE NEW RELIGION COULD NOT BE REDUCED TO A FORMULA.—INTERIOR OBSTACLES.

Agreement of the Kings against the Revolution, July 27th, 1790.—Interior Obstacles.—Disunion in France.—No great Revolution had ever been made with so little sacrifice.—Religious Fecundity of 1790.—Inventive Powers of France.—Generous Impulse in the People.—Re-action of Egotism and Fear, Imitation and Animosity.—The Revolution being impeded, produces its Political results, but cannot yet attain the Religious and Social results which would have placed it on a solid foundation.

ON the very night before the festival, from the 13th to the 14th of July, when the whole population, full of enthusiasm and confidence, was absorbed by one thought, advantage was taken of that moment to fetch away from the prison of the Abbaye the deviser of the last plot, and the agent of the emigrants, Bonne de Savardin, who wanted to introduce them into Lyons, and whose confessions might be fatal to the royalists.

At the same time, M. de Flachslanden the queen's confidential man with the Count d'Artois, was sent by him to welcome Froment, who had escaped from Nismes, and to congratulate him at Nice.

On the 27th, the Assembly learned that the king granted to the Austrians a passage through the French territory, to go and quash the revolution in Belgium.

On the same day, a memorable date, July 27th, 1790, Europe made her first alliance against the Revolution, and first

against that of Brabant. The preliminaries of the treaty were signed at Reichembach. England, Prussia, and Holland abandoned to the vengeance of Austria, Belgium whom they had excited to rebellion and encouraged, who hoped only in them, and later still, and to her last hour, persisted in expecting them to come and save her.

In the same month, Mr. Pitt, feeling sure of the European alliance, did not hesitate to say in open parliament, that he approved every word of Burke's diatribe against the Revolution and against France—an infamous book, wild with rage, full of calumny, scurrilous abuse, and insulting buffoonery, in which the author compares the French to galley-slaves breaking their chain, treads under foot the Declaration of the rights of man, tears it in pieces, and spits upon it.

Oh! what a cruel, painful discovery! Those whom we thought our friends are our most bitter enemies! It was high time to recover from our philanthropic illusions and credulous sympathies. The Revolution was forbid to remain in its age of innocency upon pain of dissolution.

But, whether painful or not, we behold the truth face to face, and gaze upon it firmly, abroad and at home. I have followed poor France, so candid and still so credulous, in the too easy impulse of her heart, and in her voluntary and involuntary blindness. In presence of these unforeseen dangers, I must do as she did, search more deeply into the reality, and fathom, at the same time, the danger and the resources of the opposition.

As for the danger, it would not be formidable, if France were not divided. The truth must be told: union was sincere at that sublime moment which I have had the happiness to describe; it was true, but transient; and soon the disunion of classes and opinions had reappeared. ✓

On the 18th of July, but four days after the festival, so happily concluded, when there was so much reason to confide in the people, and when it was necessary to have maintained and strengthened union in presence of danger, Chapelier (what a change for the president of the 4th of August!)—even Chapelier proposed to require a uniform from the National Guard; that is to say, to confine it to the rich or upper class, and so lead the way to the disarming of the poor! This

proposal, we must say for the honour of that time, was disrelished and ill received even by the rich (excepting the citizen class at Paris and Lafayette's partisans); Barbaroux censured it at Marseilles; and the opulent city of Bordeaux rejected it, and protested that, to recognise one another, a simple ribbon would suffice.

These germs of disunion in the National Guard, and the distrust which began to arise against the municipalities, would necessarily multiply and strengthen the voluntary associations. The confederation had proved insufficient, and the institution of the new powers had not sufficed; it required, therefore, some extra-legal power. To oppose the vast conspiracy then preparing, it was necessary to invent another conspiracy. Let that of the Jacobins now arise, and envelop the whole of France.

*Two thousand four hundred* societies, in as many towns or villages become affiliated to it in less than two years. This great and terrible machine gives the Revolution an incalculable power, which alone can save it, in the dissolution of public authority; but also it seriously modifies its character, and changes and alters its primitive inspiration.

This inspiration was one of entire confidence and benevolence. Candour and credulity is the character of the first revolutionary age, which has passed away never to return. An affecting history, which nobody will ever read without shedding tears; perhaps, also, without a bitter smile. What! were we then so childish, so easy to deceive! What! duped to such a degree! . . . But, no matter! let people laugh if they will; we will never repent of having been that confiding and merciful people.

I have read many histories of revolutions, and can affirm what a royalist avowed in 1791,—*that never had any great revolution cost less bloodshed and weeping.* The disturbances, inseparable from so great an overthrow, have been purposely magnified, and complaisantly exaggerated, from the impassioned accounts which our enemies received and solicited from all who had suffered.

In reality, only one class, the clergy, was able, with any appearance of truth, to call itself robbed. And nevertheless, the result of that spoliation was, that the great bulk of the

clergy, starved under the old system for the emolument of a few prelates, had, at length, a comfortable livelihood.

The nobles had lost their feudal rights; but, in many provinces, especially in Languedoc, they gained much more as proprietors in no longer paying tithes, than they lost as lords of the manor in feudal rights.

Though divested of the gothic and ridiculous honours of fiefs, now become an absurdity, they had not fallen in the social scale. The true honour of citizenship, of which the majority were hardly worthy, the highest places in the municipalities, and rank in the National Guard, had been bestowed on them with blind deference almost everywhere.

This was excessive, imprudent confidence. But the new generation, in presence of the infinite prospect which the future afforded, haggled but little with the past. It asked the other only to let it go and live. Immense was the faith, the hope. All those millions of men, serfs only yesterday, and now men and citizens, summoned, in the self-same day, all at once, from death to life,—these newborn infants of the Revolution were arriving with an unheard-of abundance of strength, good will, and confidence, willingly believing in the incredible. Indeed, what were they themselves? A miracle. Born in April of '89, sprung up into manhood on the 14th of July, all these warriors rising from the glebe, will, in a day or two, become public men, magistrates—(thirteen hundred thousand magistrates! . . .) and shortly proprietors, the peasant having almost within his reach his dream, his paradise,—a property! The land, yesterday so dreary and barren, in the palsied palms of priests, is now passing into the glowing and sinewy hands of this youthful husbandman. What hope, what love in that happy year! Amidst the confederations, marriage, that natural confederation, went on multiplying: the civic oath and the vow of hymen were made together at the altar. It is an extraordinary fact that marriages were one-fifth more numerous during that glorious year of hope.\*

Ah! that great movement of hearts promised something more, a far different fecundity. Fruitful in men and laws, that

\* Marriages, that year, increased one-fifth at Paris, the very town which was then the most needy; that to which paupers flocked in crowds; it may be supposed that marriages were still more numerous in other parts of France.



moral union of the soul and the will led people to expect a new dogma, a new and powerful idea, both social and religious. At the mere sight of the field of confederation, everybody would have sworn that, from that sublime moment, from so many pure and sincere desires, from such an effusion of tears, and from the concentrated ardour of so many fervent prayers, a God was about to arise.

All saw and felt the divine sentiment. Even the men the least favourably disposed towards the Revolution, started at that moment, and perceived a glorious advent approaching. Our wild peasants of Maine and the marches of Brittany, whom a perfidious fanaticism was about to turn against us, then came of their own accord, all in emotion, to join our confederations, and kiss the altar of the unknown God.

O rare, divine, and highly-favoured moment, in which a world may be born ! . . . Who can say when such another will return ? Who will undertake to explain this profound mystery which brings forth a man, a people, a new God !

Conception ! rapid, single, and terrible instant ! . . . So rapid, yet so prepared ! It requires the concurrent assistance of so many different powers, which from the depths of ages,—from the infinite variety of existences, meet together for that single instant !

One fact has been noticed, which is that France, like a woman preparing for extraordinary labour, possessed, besides the revolutionary generation, sacrificed to action, another generation in reserve, more fruitful and inventive,—that of the men who were twenty years of age, or rather more, in 1790. There had been an incredible production of power and genius : two years (1768 and 1769) had produced at once Bonaparte, Hoche, Marceau and Joubert, Cuvier and Châteaubriand, and the two Fourriers. Saint-Martin, Saint-Simon, De Maistre, Bonald, and Madame de Staël, were born just before, as also Méhul, Lesueur, and the Chéniers ; and, a little later, Geoffroi-Saint-Hilaire, Bichat, Ampère, and Sénancour.\*

\* If the cause of this astonishing eruption of genius be inquired into, the answer will doubtless be, that these men found the most powerful excitation in the Revolution, an entirely new liberty of mind, &c. But, in my opinion, there is primitively another cause. These admirable children were conceived and brought forth at the moment when the age, morally relieved by the genius

What a marvellous garland for confederate France are these youths whom nobody has yet heard of! Who would not be terrified on beholding on her brow those magnificent diamonds which are now sparkling in obscurity!

Doubtless she possessed, in that immense multitude, many others beside these; they alone grew up and lived. But, you may rest assured that the vivifying heat of that wonderful tempest was not confined to the production of these few men. Millions were born full of the divine inspiration. Nay, more, the magnanimity, the heroic goodness which existed in a whole people at that sacred moment, caused a different inspiration to be expected from the geniuses whom it produced. If you except a few who were heroes of kindness, you will perceive that the others, who were men of action, invention, and calculation, impelled by the influence of the physical and mechanical sciences, rushed violently forth in pursuit of results; an immense, though too often sterile, power was concentrated in their vigorous minds. None of them possessed that flood of affection, that spring of living waters where nations quench their thirst.

Oh! how much more was there in the people of the Confederation than in Cuvier, Fourier, or Bonaparte!

In that people there resided the immense soul of the Revolution, in its twofold form and in its two ages.

The first age, a reparation for the long sufferings of mankind, was a transport of justice; the Revolution reduced the philosophy of the eighteenth century into a formula of laws.

In its second age, which must come sooner or later, it will emerge from formulas, find her religious faith (on which every political law is founded), and, in this divine liberty, which the excellence of the heart alone affords, will bear unknown fruits of goodness and brotherly love.

Such was the moral infinite brooding in that people (and what is mortal genius compared to this?), when, at noon on the 14th of July, they raised their hands to heaven.

On that day, everything was possible. Every kind of

of Rousseau, seized again upon hope and faith. At that matinal dawn of a new religion, the women awoke, illumined, and the result was a superhuman generation.

dissension had ceased: there was no longer either nobility, citizens, or people. The future was present . . . That is to say, time itself was no more. It was a flash of eternity.

There was nothing, one would think, to prevent the social and religious age of the Revolution, which is still receding before us, from being realized. If the heroic goodness of that moment had been able to maintain itself, mankind had gained a century or more, and had found that it had, at one spring, leaped over a world of sorrows.

But is such a position lasting? Was it very possible that the social barriers, on that day levelled, should be left on the ground, and that confidence should subsist between men of different classes, interests, and opinions?

It was certainly difficult; and yet less difficult than at any other period in the history of the world.

Magnanimous instincts had burst forth in every class, which simplified everything. Difficulties, insoluble before and afterwards, were then resolved of themselves.

Many a suspicion, reasonable perhaps in the commencement of the Revolution, was less so at such a moment. What had been impossible in October became possible in July. For instance, in October 1789, there had been reason to fear that the bulk of the rural electors might serve the aristocracy; but this fear could not subsist in July 1790; for the peasant was obeying in almost every locality, the impulse of the Revolution, with as much zeal as the town populations.

The proletary classes in towns, which constitute the enormous difficulty at the present day, then scarcely existed, except at Paris and in a few large towns, where the starving flocked together. We must not allot to that period, nor behold thirty years before their birth, the millions of workmen who have sprung up since 1815.

Therefore, in reality, the obstacle between the citizen-class and the people was very slight. The former was able, and ought fearlessly to have cast itself into the arms of the other.

That citizen-class, imbued with the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau was more the friend of humanity, and more disinterested and generous than that which has been formed by industrialism, but it was timid; for the manners and characters, formed by the deplorable ancient system, were

necessarily weak. The citizen-class trembled in presence of the Revolution that it had made, and recoiled at its own work. It was led astray and ruined by fear far more than by self-interest.

It ought not to have allowed itself to be foolishly scared by an idle panic, nor to have recoiled in alarm from the ocean it had roused from its slumber. It ought to have plunged into its bosom. Then the illusion of dread would have disappeared. What had appeared to you afar an ocean with dangerous roaring waves, would, on a nearer view, have proved to be men and friends,—brethren stretching forth their arms to embrace you.

Nobody knows to what a degree old habits of deference, faith, and easy confidence in the educated classes, subsisted at that period among the people. At that moment, they saw among them their orators, their advocates, and all the champions of their cause; and they advanced towards them with a noble heart; but the others drew back.

However, let us not generalise inconsiderately. An extremely numerous portion of the citizen-class, far from recoiling like the rest, far from causing an obstacle to the Revolution by a malevolent inertness, devoted themselves to it, and entered it with the same transport as the people. Our patriotic Legislative Assembly, and that of the Convention (Montagnards or Girondists, no matter, without any distinction of parties), belonged entirely to the citizen-class. Add, moreover, the patriotic assemblies, such as they were in the beginning, especially the Jacobins; those of Paris, whose lists we possess, do not appear to have admitted a single man of the uneducated classes before 1793. This bulk of revolutionary citizens, men of letters, journalists, artists, lawyers, physicians, priests, and others, was immensely increased by the citizens who had acquired national estates.

But, although so considerable a portion of the citizen-class entered into the Revolution, by devotion or interest, the primitive revolutionary inspiration was sensibly modified within them by the necessities of the great struggle they had to sustain, by the furious bitterness of the contest, and by the exasperation and venomous spleen proceeding from opposition and animosity. So that, whilst one portion of the citizen-class was corrupted

by egotism and *fear*, the other was made fierce by *hatred*, and as though changed in nature, and transported out of all human sentiment. Whereas the people, doubtless violent and furious, but not being systematically hateful, deviated much less from nature.

We have here two sources of weakness : *hatred* and *fear*. It was necessary to remain strong in order to remain good : an uncommon and difficult task, and perhaps impossible to perform under those terrible circumstances.

All had certainly loved on the 14th of July ; they ought also to have loved on the morrow.

It would have been necessary for the timid portion of the citizen-class to have borne more carefully in mind its humane ideas and philanthropical wishes ; to have persisted in them on the day of danger, and, whether frightened or not, to have done as people do at sea, trusted in God, and sworn to follow the new faith through the different kinds of sacrifices it might impose to save the people.

Moreover, it would have been necessary for the bold and revolutionary portion of the citizen-class, in the midst of danger, and in open warfare, to have kept their heart at a higher standard ; not to have allowed themselves to be deterred and cast from their sublime enthusiasm into the gulf of hatred.

Alas ! how difficult it is, for even the strongest combatants, to govern their energies with a firm and serene heart, to fight with the arm, and still preserve within themselves the heroism of peace. The Revolution did much ; but what would it not have done, had it been able to remain, at least for a moment, in its lofty position ?

First, it would have lasted. It would not have suffered the sad downfall of 1800, whereby the souls of men, sterilised by fear or hatred, became for a long time unfruitful.

Next, it would have been not written only, but also put in practice ; from political abstractions it would have descended to social realities. The sentiment of courageous kindness, its starting-point and first impulse, would not have remained wavering in a state of vague sentiment—of generalities. It would have gone on extending itself and becoming more exact at the same time, wishing to enter everywhere, penetrating into the ramifications of the laws, and extending even to the



most free actions, and circulating in the most distant parts of the social system.

Having sprung from the mind, and returning to it after having traversed the sphere of action, this sympathetic sentiment of love of mankind would have naturally brought about a religious renovation.

When the human soul thus follows its nature, and remains benevolent, when, free from egotism, it seeks seriously a remedy for the sufferings of men, then beyond the region of the law and manners, at a point where every power ends, imagination and sympathy still continue ; the soul follows them still, and still pants for good ; and meditating in self-communion, becomes profound.

This is a very different thing from profundity of the mind and scientific invention. It is a profundity of tenderness and will of a very different fecundity, producing a living fruit. A strange incubation, the more divine as it is more natural ! From a divine warmth, without either art or effort, sometimes from the heart of the simple, bursts forth the new genius, the new comfort for the expectant world. What is its form ? It varies according to time and place ; but whether this tender but powerful soul reside in one individual, or extend throughout a whole people, whether it be a man, a living word, a book, a written sentence, no matter, it is ever God.

## CHAPTER II.

### CONTINUATION.—EXTERIOR OBSTACLES.—TWO SORTS OF HYPOCRISY: THE HYPOCRISY OF AUTHORITY, AND THE PRIEST.

The Priest employs the Confessional and the Press against the Revolution.—Pamphlets of the Catholics in 1790.—Having been barren for several ages, they were unable to stifle the Revolution.—Their Impotency since 1800.—The Revolution must give Religious Food to the Soul.

I HAVE said what was the interior obstacle—fear and hatred; but the exterior obstacle precedes the other ; and perhaps without it the other would not have existed.

No, the interior obstacle was neither the primary nor the



principal one ; it would have been powerless, annulled, and neutralised in the immensity of the heroic movement which was then producing the new life.

A hostile fatality existed abroad, which checked the delivery of France.

Whom must we accuse ? Who are to be charged with the crime of this miscarriage ? Who are those who, beholding France in labour, devised the wicked charm to cause abortion ; who are the reprobates who dared to lay a hand on her, compelled her to action, and forced her to gird on her sword and march to the fight ?

Oh ! is not every being sacred at such a moment ? Has not a woman or a nation in labour a right to the respect and prayers of mankind.

Accursed be he, who surprising a Newton in the delivery of genius, stifles an idea in its birth ! Accursed be he who, finding a woman at the painful moment when all nature conspires with her, praying and weeping for her, retards the birth of man ! But three-fold, a thousand-fold accursed be he who, beholding the prodigious spectacle of a people in the heroic, magnanimous, and disinterested state, endeavours to impede, to stifle this miracle, which was bringing forth a world !

How came nations to agree and arm against the interest of nations ? This is a dark and dismal mystery !

A similar miracle of the devil had been seen in our wars of religion ; I mean the great Jesuit business which, in less than half a century, turned day into night, that horrid night of murders termed the Thirty Years' War. But at all events this required half a century, and education conducted by Jesuits ; it was necessary to form and educate a generation on purpose, and train up a new world in error and falsehood. Those who then passed from black to white, who after seeing light swore it was darkness, were not the same men.

But in the present case the trick was more clever : it required only a few years.

This rapid success was owing to two causes :

1. A clever and enormous use of the great modern machine, the Press,—the instrument of liberty turned against liberty. The terrible acceleration which this machine acquired in the eighteenth century, that surprising rapidity, which sends forth

sheet after sheet, without allowing one time to reflect, examine, or inquire into anything, was to the advantage of falsehood.

2. Falsehood was far better appropriated to the different degrees of imbecility proceeding from two laboratories, prepared by two agents, in two different processes,—the old and the new: the Catholic and despotic factory, and the English factory, self-styled constitutional.

This is what thoroughly distinguishes the modern world, and counterbalances all its progress: it is its possessing two *hypocrisies*; the middle ages had but one; but we possess two: the hypoerisy of authority, and the hypoerisy of liberty,—in two words, The *Priest* and the *Englishman*, the two forms of Tartuffe.

The priest acts principally upon the women and the peasantry, and the Englishman upon the citizen-classes.

Let us add here a word about the priest, merely to explain what we have said elsewhere.

The old factory of falsehood recommences in '89, by every means at once. On one hand, as formerly, the secret propagation by means of the confessional, the mystery between priest and woman,—publicity in a low voice, a few hints whispered into the ear. On the other hand, a furious press, far more daring than the other, inasmuch as by slipping its papers underhand to trusty persons, to simple and credulous persons all convinced beforehand, it knows very well that it has to fear no control. Those pamphlets were daggers; we have some now in our possession which equal or surpass those of Marat in violence and the thirst of blood.

Whoever wishes to see how far human language dares venture in audacious falsehood, has only to read the pamphlet which Froment, their agent at Nismes, threw forth from the emigrant party, in the month of August, 1790. Therein is quite a long romance unfolded at pleasure in full security: how the Calvinist republic, founded in the sixteenth century, and gradually built up, triumphs in '89; how the National Assembly has given a commission to the Protestants of the South to slaughter all the Catholics, in order to divide the kingdom into federative republics, &c. &c.

This atrocious pamphlet, though circulated about Paris, slipped under the doors by night, and distributed in the *cafés*

and churches, had but very little effect in town ; but a very great one in the country. This was followed by a thousand others. Varied according to the different tendencies of the South or the West, hawked about by good ecclesiastics, loyal nobles, and affectionate and devout women, they commenced the grand work of prevarication, error, and fanatical stupidity, which, being conscientiously followed up for two years, gave us La Vendée and the war of the Chouans : thence, inversely, that horrible phrenzy of France, called the *Reign of Terror*.

If it had been possible to enlighten those blind multitudes that they let loose against us, we would not have discussed with them the ground-work of their dogma which it is so easy to attack. We would simply have made an appeal to experience and history. To overthrow their teachers, it is sufficient to relate it.

Whatever that doctrine may be, it has done nothing for ages ; and whatever new and fruitful work is done, has been done in spite of it ; for, in spite of it, Columbus discovered America, and Galileo the heavens.

For nearly five hundred years it has caused every impediment to progress in the sciences of God. Since, in the year 1200, Joachim de Flores, a true prophet, announced that the Kingdom of Christ would be succeeded by the Holy Spirit ; since, in 1300, Dante sealed up the Christian world, every grand original thought has been found to be on the other side. Genius was not wanting ; but it was ever of a doubtful critical character. Rabelais, Shakspeare, and Molière, those eminently fruitful geniuses, would have been far more so, had they not been condemned to the labour of shaking the old sacred block which they found in their path. Thus, the heroes of the Spirit have been for five hundred years especially negative : a great loss for mankind !

The elegant and noble writers of the ages of Louis XIV. squander an immense fund of intelligence, style, and talent, in translating and glorifying a worn-out text. What do they gain by it ? After the death of Bossuet, the world, without halting with that pompous writer, follows Voltaire, and renews its true tradition, that of Rabelais and Molière. Thus, the ancient system, notwithstanding so many efforts, has raised no monument.

It is just like the crane ever to be seen in the cathedral of Cologne, which seems to be working and wishing to raise up stones. It was set up in 1300. In 1400, it was still there ; you will recognise it in one of Van Eyck's drawings (in the museum at Bruges) ; yet the work makes no progress. I saw it twenty years ago ; and the work was still at the same point. This very year, I saw it again, and still the same. What works have been made during those five centuries ; and yet the crane makes no progress.

The system is powerless for producing, but all-powerful for preventing ; nothing as life, yet strong as a lifeless institution, which, if it does not annihilate nor communicate death, at least encumbers the earth and blights it so that nothing can grow on it.

Whatever be the real services that it may have done mankind at other periods, this old system has incurred the heavy responsibility of having barbarously impeded the new principle at the first moment of fecundity. Not destroyed that fecundity ; no, that is impossible. Nothing can be done against God ; but impeded, delayed, and defiled by urging it to deeds of violence in order afterwards to reproach it with having committed them.

Alas ! poor Revolution, that had begun by loving everything, every man, every nation, every idea ; alas ! they have rendered her like themselves, a cruel murderess of ideas and men, and plunged her headlong into savage barbarity !

It is a grand but mournful spectacle, to behold on the morrow of the Revolution, when the earth had covered those lifeless beings, and their sepulchres were closed, the gentle yet profound mystic Saint Martin, coming to absolve and bless the departed Revolution. We hear no reproach, no insult. He embraces the whole, rejects nothing, takes Voltaire, accepts Rousseau, and folds them to his bosom. You would think it was some fond ivy winding about and clasping a tomb,\*

\* The originality is especially in this, that we plainly perceive that the ivy derives its life, not from the earth, not from itself, but from the very object that it clasps,—I mean the Revolution. Many simple yet sublime ideas are expressed by this author in the kindest spirit. *Lettre à un Ami sur la Revolution*, an. iii. Consequently prior by two years to M. de Maistre's *Considérations*, by-the-by a far less original production.

gentle, yet strong and powerful, and saying, "Now I have my sepulchre ! "

He was mistaken, his embrace was void. Though supposed to be dead, the Revolution was so vivacious, that, whilst her genius was slumbering, her warlike soul was invading Europe. To subdue the kings of the earth, her shadow would suffice.

She lives on, in spite of everything. Her last-born, Bonaparte, insults her in vain ; in vain does he ask her, with a bitter smile, "What is the use of ideas ? " He himself is in search of an idea, and he will hunt for it in vain ; in vain does he open the temples ; he knows not what to put therein : he goes as far as old Rome ; and, to find life, rummages the catacombs ; he finds nothing and brings back nothing save the old idol of the dead. Behold it restored to the church ; but the church is empty !

O radical impotency ! To have on your side the favourite of victory, and still remain vanquished ! The royalty of glory, the royalty of divine right, and the royalty of money will work, but in vain, for a whole half century to arouse the old spirit against the Revolution. They will blow till they are breathless upon those dead ashes, they will never more obtain a spark. . . . O kings, why do you exhaust yourselves ? Here are others, greater kings than you, who have succeeded no better ! What such men as Châteaubriand and De Maistre together are unable to accomplish, do you, poor kings, imagine that you will ever be able to perform ? . . . Truly, all men have tried it with hearty good-will ; both great and small, one by art, another by history or legendary lore, we have all charitably attempted to revive the old carcase ; but it has remained cold and sterile.

In the meantime, the world is pining away, suffering, hungry and thirsty. "What are we to give to the people ? When your child asks you for bread, do you give him a stone ? " The miracle of multiplication effected at the Sermon on the Mount, has not been renewed. We have been told : "Whoever shall draw from my fountain shall never thirst." We have drawn for two thousand years, and are still thirsty.

And what is offered to us to drink, is what nobody for a long time has been able to endure : a saviour for the elect, the religion of privilege, the injustice of God. No, this is too bitter.

If you, venerable spirit of the past, have loved men, allow us also to seek some food and a fountain for them. For, how can we see all those millions lying yonder, emaciated, and dying at the foot of the mountain, and whom you no longer nourish.

The people must not die ; do not, therefore, prevent their being fed. She who received them to her bosom, even the Revolution, she who so bountifully undertook to nourish them, who generously fed them with her milk and her blood,—she has remained invulnerable against you all. Now leave her alone ; and no longer interpose between the mother and her children.

That nourishment is exhausted by warfare. For our part, we will give food. We must, one way or other, find for them bread for the body and food for the mind. Let us give them ours, without hesitation ; the more we give, the more there remains. This is the mystery, the miracle. Let us pour out our life, with a bountiful hand : our hearts will expand in the same proportion ! Let us not be niggards of our mortal existence, and God will increase within us.

You frequently groan over your poverty of spirit, your sterility, and inquire why the light of the future is so slow in arriving, and you would wish to have a talisman, a formula of invocation to summon it before you. That all powerful formula, which is supposed to be simple, but whose fecundity is known only to him who has fathomed its signification, consists in these words : *Be good.*



## CHAPTER III.

## CONTINUATION.—EXTERIOR OBSTACLES.—HYPOCRISY OF LIBERTY, THE ENGLISHMAN.

The English False Ideal.—England deceived France by France.—Real Causes of England's greatness.—Montesquieu's Political Romance.—Right obscured and stifled by Physics.—Pretended constitutional equilibrium.—False European equilibrium of Powers.—England's efforts to neutralise Holland, Portugal, and France.—Having no Moral Idea, England has no power over France.—Her hatred of France.—Two Irishmen assist that hatred.—Lally-Tollendal.—Kind-hearted men provoke a Universal Warfare.—Burke's ravings.—Unanimity between the Priest and the Englishman.—Hateful credulity of the English Nation.—France loves and welcomes the English.—Results of the struggle between the two Nations.—The Englishman has become a simple piece of Machinery.—The Frenchman has remained Man.

THE old Gothic principle, unaided, would never have been able to stop and lead astray the youthful impulse of France. No power would have been sufficient. The only thing that was able to lead her wrong, and which in fact did so, was an illusion, a false and spurious ideal by which she might be duped, deceived, and diverted from her thoughts.

It is a cruel sight to behold France bringing forth between two witches, the old negress of the middle ages, Confession, Inquisition,—and the other, the young English one, with her vain and mendacious language, covering sordid interest with political fictions in which she herself does not believe.

Long had the latter been working at the ruin of France, employing the genius of France to deceive her. Three men, eminently French, were, in the course of that century, caressed and gained over by that cunning England, so haughty in attitude, but so coaxing and base as soon as ever her own interest intervenes. She clutched Voltaire by her unprincipled Bolingbroke, by a semblance of religious liberty (whilst crushing Ireland). She ensnared Mirabeau, at first very averse to her, by her Anglo-Genoese who assisted him in his idleness and often wrote for him; she had found him frightened

between a deceased monarchy and an imminent republic, and offered him her spurious system as a plank in a shipwreck.

The most fatal seduction was that of Montesquieu. It would be too long to explain here how that brilliant genius (so easily caught by vanity), was followed, seized, and secured by the English, after the success of his *Persian Letters*; how cunning mediocrity mystified genius. Genius, as we know, is too often credulous, sympathetic, inclined to admire, and, which renders it easy to capture, usually systematical: you have only to exhibit a nation rather flattering to its systems, and it will follow more tamely than a child.

However, none can be cheated by such means but those who are already deceived beforehand, those who have in their very hearts the germ of error. I say in their hearts, because error penetrates almost always at the side where morality is weakest.

Yes, it must be confessed that if that genius, so great, so noble and gentle, so eminently humane, has nevertheless exercised a fatal influence over the political morality of Europe, it is because, great as he was, he obeyed a sentiment that is anything but grand, but which leads astray all the weak-hearted: respect and admiration for success.

Wherever success appears, the vulgar behold wisdom. England was successful. Our ingenious Gaseon undertook to explain English wisdom, and sought for the cause of her extraordinary success in the perfection of her government and the profound mechanism of her constitution. His ignorance assisted him. Unacquainted with either the history or the law of the country of which he spoke, he was more at his ease in placing there the system with which he amused his mind. Xenophon laid the scene of his reveries among the Persians, Plato in Egypt and Atlantis. Thus England became the Atlantis of Montesquieu.

England's greatness proceeded from three things which he seems to have little understood. In this place, I can do no more than indicate them.

1. The principal author and creator of that great power in the seventeenth century was France herself, I mean the imbecility of Catholic France, the confessors of Louis XIV., who urged him against Holland, his natural ally, thus casting Holland into the arms of England, and thereby giving to the latter the dominion of the seas.

2. England, the faithful guardian of the barbarous laws of the middle ages, of feudal iniquity (hereditary birth-rights, &c.), had to choose between two things,—to become just, or to find a way of getting rid of the victims of injustice. She adopted the latter course, and has periodically cast her children into the ocean. She was able to support this cancer of iniquity which is consuming her, only by means of these periodical purgations. Hence the incessant need of emigrations,—those colonies from age to age.

3. After England's sublime hour, that of the Invincible Armada and Shakspeare, that time when English genius soared like a great sea-eagle, that genius descended lower and lower, tended to applications, became more and more practical, minutely precise, special and *specifying*. An overwhelming aristocracy, keeping it in degradation, has made it a workman, an artist. She has thus created, without prejudice to her outward colonies, a sort of interior colony, an England in England, and one so enormous and prodigious that it may one day sink the island and bury it in the ocean.

English greatness, riches at least and an industrial development, have their principal origin in this genius of precision, application, and specification. England has always gained in this sense; but, on the other hand, for extent and profundity, for the faculties of high generalisation, in matters of art and philosophy, nobody certainly can say that she has improved since Shakspeare.

As for her very complicated constitution, about which so much noise has been made, it may nevertheless be reduced to one word. The first power is aristocracy, the second aristocracy, and the third aristocracy. This aristocracy goes on incessantly recruiting its body with all those who grow rich. "To be rich in order to be noble," is the absorbing thought of the Englishman. Property, specially territorial and feudal, is the religion of the country.

English institutions are, almost all, local, special, insular, and impossible to export. Never had the English imagined that anybody would be so mad as to borrow from their island, laws that are so entirely its own. But here is a Frenchman who undertakes to prove that all this Gothic chaos of customs and heaps of precedents, often contradictory, and which puzzle

their most learned practitioners,—that this chaos is order itself, that it is the eternal model exhibited to mankind. Nay more, with the power of his imagination, he sees and recognises in it an image of the celestial system, equilibrium, gravitation, &c. Before your Newton had discovered the heavenly system, said he to them, it existed in your laws . . .

“What is the law? a relation. And this relation varies according to climate. The happy relation of equilibrium, the balance of powers, is the true political basis, on which every society is grounded.”\*

What a subject of astonishment it would have been for the great juris-consults, those pontiffs of the Stoic law, to hear all this language of physics and mechanics,—equilibrium, poise, counter-poise, and gravitation!

Oh! it was not for such a material and materialist law, that Papinian gave the tyrant the sublime answer which caused his martyrdom. It was not for such a law that our great Dumoulin braved the poniard, and was four times on the point of being assassinated. Neither did politicians, such as Barneveldt and De Witt, when they chanted in torture *Justum et tenacem*, imagine that right was a physical matter; they believed in the right of the mind.

However, we must not lay the whole blame of this abasement of law on M. de Montesquieu. As early as the seventeenth century, a false Jesuitical spiritualism had turned the minds of men towards the sphere in which liberty was then bursting forth,—the material sciences, transfigured by Galileo. Politics, yielding to their ascendancy, had gradually assumed their language. Descartes contributed to this by the popularity of his works, even by his romances of physics; and Newton came with his glory and immense authority, with Voltaire for his translator! Then equilibrium, gravitation, appeared to be the universal law of the world, both moral and physical.

People forgot that law is, so to speak, the contrary of physics. The latter balances powers and seeks the equilibrium

\* Note, that this idea of law, however low it may be, was a remarkable progress over the entirely English theory of Hobbes and Locke, who see the just only in the useful. Besides the English seize and immediately profit by Montesquieu's idea. His book appeared in 1748, and in 1753 they open with great ostentation the Commentaries of Blackstone, his imitator and commentator

of forces. But the very essence of law is to hold the weak and the strong in equal consideration, to put the small and impotent in the balance and judge that they weigh just as much as the powerful.

This is the sublime faculty of law, by which it despises nature, and places the heavens themselves under foot! . . . Avaunt physics! Avaunt mechanics! This is holy ground! Remain without. This is a world absurd and unintelligible to you, in which judgment is given, in contempt of all your mathematics, that the less is equal to or surpasses the greater, and that the weaker party is the stronger.

Lay aside, then, your pretensions to reduce morality to physics; away with your mechanical politics which place right in the balance of powers.

Right is right, and good is good; no other definition is necessary; for every human heart will understand. Such was the starting-point of our masters, the great Stoics who grounded Roman jurisprudence on this basis. Such, likewise, is the result of true philosophy, of Rousseau and Kant, those great revolutionists, and such the primary creed of our Revolution.

What did this famous equilibrium effect, when put in practice?

If the balance of powers really existed, as Bentham and others have very properly remarked, it would end merely in complete immobility. It would be nothing more than the maintenance of the *statu quo*. Would this be a maintenance of order? Not always. It is possible for the *statu quo* to be the *immobility* of disorder and render it permanent.

The social *statu quo*, surrounded in England with fine guarantees, which, by the by, entertaining man's dignity, did but consecrate for every body his actual right; to these the right of having everything, to those the right of starving. There was one thing to remedy this, of which we have spoken, the custom of throwing a part of the population into the sea.

The *statu quo* had been eagerly desired in Europe, after the sanguinary horrors of the wars of religion. The world unable any longer to move in its exhausted state, allowed itself to be persuaded that the balance of interests would be sufficient for order, right being altogether left out of the



question. Thus, nothing would ever stir again ; the little would ever remain little, and the strong ever strong. Vain hope ! Whenever a new idea came forth, whenever one of the powers brought a moral force into the world, as France did in the dawn of the reign of Louis XIV., the France of Colbert and Molière, the equilibrium was broken up.

In ordinary times, it is true, the voracity of each was kept in check by the voracity of all. But, at bottom, there was no idea of right. They were like a troop of wolves staring at one another in a circle ; and if one grew weak, they all pounced upon it. Thus, on the accession of the youthful Maria-Theresa, Austria seems weak and unprotected ; therefore, they worry Austria ! Next, it is the turn of little Prussia ; woe to Prussia ! They endeavour to devour her. From time to time, they snatch a morsel from Turkey. Russia bites Sweden ; and Austria would swallow up Bavaria, if the others did not rush between them. Such is the hideous aspect of that circus of wild beasts.

This fiction of equilibrium, of a European balance of powers, always gravely attested in the eighteenth century, seems then to be still governing Europe.

The lesser states are made to bear it in mind, as a morality appropriated to them, a sort of Catechism. The great powers at either extremity, are, in the meantime, growing more powerful ; till two giants are formed—England and Russia.

Russia, an Asiatic power, has less need of hypocrisy. She lays a brutal heavy hand on Poland whom she dismembers ; she forces her neighbours to take a part in this murder, to share in the spoils, not allowing them to remain pure, and reckoning, moreover, to get back the share she had allowed, when she should take them in their turn.

Russia, a personification of barbarity organised, can dispense with having an idea : at that period Panslavism had not been invented for her. But England, the great mistress of hypocrisy, must pretend to have an idea. She presents herself boldly (to borrow Madame de Staël's absurd expression) as "the chevalier of the liberty of the world." She will defend that liberty ; nay, more, she will regulate it, and give it a secure foundation. The receipt is easy : imitate her constitution.



O honest, liberal England! She has not taken Portugal, neither has she conquered Holland; she has merely annihilated them. Portugal, being discouraged, has gradually delivered herself up, and fallen asleep in her own ruin.\* Holland was a more difficult task; but England gradually took her also by the House of Orange; it was to found that house that she has incessantly incited the populace of the towns (for the most part foreigners) against the real Dutch, until the unfortunate country took again, under the name of Stadtholder, an English prefect, to destroy systematically her navy, and betray her day by day.

England acted the more easily on the continent, as she made no conquests there, except a few commanding and essential points, as Gibraltar is now, and as Calais long was... Let us take care of Cherbourg.†

England's ideal was to keep gradually the whole of the opposite coast,—Holland, Portugal, Belgium, and France,—by four English prefects. She imagined she had realised it, when the Duke of Orleans, her docile creature, more submissive to the English than were the Princes of Orange or Braganza, betrayed to them our policy and most intimate secrets, annihilated French commerce on their account, and destroyed with them the Spanish navy, the natural ally of ours. France, then fainting, as though exhausted by loss of blood, suffered all this in silence; they were able to do just as they pleased with her lifeless carcase.

An English commissary at Dunkerque, and the English ambassador at Paris, were receiving the homage of the prime minister and dictating his despatches! It was all over with France, if she had consented to submit to all these indignities;

\* Excepting one truly heroic but momentary interval. Pombal's threatening letter to the English will remain eternally in the memory of men.—See his *Administration*, vol. iii. p. 1—12 (1787).

† The absence of mind in which France now lives, miserably occupied with disgraceful law-suits, is terrible! She had not heard the cry of Portugal, strangled in the Turkish fashion by England, Spain, and (must it be added?) by France herself, who appears to know nothing about it. That cry has found no echo except in the heart of a man of genius.—(Quinct's *La France et la Sainte-Alliance en Portugal*, 1847.)—Now, here is something more serious, far nearer home, and more personal! And France knows nothing about it! ENGLAND IS BUILDING OPPOSITE CHERBOURG

but she appeared to be unconscious of passing events. He who does not obtain the will, obtains nothing. The English governed ; but, in spite of that, they obtained no result. They tampered with the upper classes of society, the saloons, aped the Frenchman and made themselves ridiculous, in order to influence the French ; but all this passed in the upper regions, at the surface ; nothing penetrated below. They had not then the hold that the bank and industrialism have since given them over us. The France of that age defended herself by the mind, and remained entire. One morning, she awoke and gave the English a lesson at Fontenoy.

Strange and capricious insolence ! To wish to domineer over a country which, at that very time, and under its paltry government, was influencing and captivating the world by the power of the mind ! To rule, requires a right, and this right is an idea . . . I should like to see an English idea !—A great and fruitful moral idea. England never had, nor will she ever have, any great moralist or juris-consult.\*

Greece had a right to dominion over the world ; and so had Rome ; and so had France ; for each brought with her an idea. Art, jurisprudence, and social fraternity, such, if I mistake not, are the titles. And the world has remained respectful and grateful to those nations. But industry and commerce are assuredly most useful things, and enrich their votaries. Yet why should you thank the merchant or manufacturer because he wishes to be rich ?

England was enraged to behold her rival, so submissive to her during the regency, escaping from her clutches more and more. She allied herself with whoever would hate France the most. This was the greatness of the two Pitts.

France offers an absolutely opposite spectacle ; she fights against England occasionally, but never hates her. If she aids America, it is for America herself, and for the freedom of the world. Never were the English looked upon with greater

\* Because she reduces right to a *negative* idea—that of guarantees. M. Guizot laid down in 1828 (*Préface de l'Hist. Constit. d'Hullam*, p. 9) : "That in England, revolutions have been accomplished by the *force of facts*, *without waiting till their justice* or necessity was erected into a doctrine." To speak more clearly, the theories have been created after the event ; they have come to the assistance of accomplished facts, and in order to justify them.

favour in France than at that period ; never had their novels, their Pamelas, their fashions, their races, &c., a greater success. The Duke of Orleans *ran*, drank to excess, and prided himself on being a perfect *gentleman* ; and, from time to time, he went to pay his court on the other side of the strait.

All England was pleased at the Revolution in France. She thought that one of these two things would infallibly happen : either that France, exhausting herself by civil war, would no longer be reckoned as a power in Europe,—that she would make, to use their own expression, “ a great void, a blank on the Map of Europe ;” or else, faithfully copying the English Revolution, she would preserve the royal power in a younger branch, according to the English principle of 1688 : “ The best king is he who has the worst title.”

She was astonished, astounded, to see the calm grandeur of our Revolution, who, without inquiring into all the old English rubbish, wrote for mankind the Declaration of Rights : that true legislator of the world proposed peace, and, though backed by three millions of men in arms, declared she renounced war and conquests.

And conquests she made, by the force of reason, even in the heart of England. Fox, the great English orator, Price, their economist and the founder of their credit, Priestly, their illustrious chemist, heartily hailed the first *human and universal* Revolution, which wished to end every kind of warfare, suppress animosity in this world, and, in the language of one of our countrymen : “ Upon a heap of broken weapons, make all the nations embrace.”

England found that intolerable ; and welcomed eagerly whatever accusation against us was blown across from the Continent. She believed and adopted the whole. The most interested witnesses appeared to her valuable, respectable, and irrefutable. Those were true Frenchmen. Honest England, like a jurymen with her hand on her heart, affirmed, that all those emigrants and deserters were France.

A singular fact ! France, by the grand mistake of Louis XIV. (war with Holland) gave to England the supremacy of the seas ; France, by the genius of Montesquieu, made for the English their famous constitutional theory, which gave them authority in this world ; and France, once more, at

the time of the Revolution gave them ready forged those polemical weapons with which they attacked her.

This history is like a duel of France with France. She alone then possessed the spark of life ; she alone was truly the world, and, as such, had her adversaries in her own bosom. That is the sad blot upon her grandeur,—to have been able to find no serious enemy but in herself.

Our deserters went one after another to inspire and dictate to the English their arguments against us. First Calonne, then Necker, then Dumouriez, people to whom France had intrusted her affairs, who take advantage of that knowledge, and write books profoundly English against France.

These three had not however the whole of the responsibility. Calonne was too much despised to be believed, and the others too much hated.

The man who acted undoubtedly most effectually against the Revolution, who injured France the most, and reassured England on the legitimacy of her hatred, was an Irishman (by origin), Lally-Tollendal.

It was from him that another Irishman, Burke, received the ready-made text ; from him did he depart as an emissary, conveying animosity and insult to the second power, and gave the tone to Europe. Those two men spoke ; and everybody repeated their words.

Let it not be said that I load them with an exaggerated responsibility, that with their brilliant eloquence devoid of ideas, and the frivolity of their character, they had nothing in them that could thus effect the change of Europe. I answer that such men make but better actors, because they act their parts in earnest, and because their interior emptiness enables them the better to adopt and urge forward eagerly all the ideas of others, as their own. We have seen lately a very similar person, O'Connell, quite as noisy, and quite as empty, uttering, for the profit of England and the detriment of Ireland, the word that was able to rob that poor Ireland of perhaps her future salvation, the sympathy of France, by claiming for Irishmen the slaughter of Waterloo.

The eloquent, worthy, kind-hearted and lacrymose Lally, who wrote only with tears, and lived with a handkerchief to his eyes, had entered life in a very romantic manner, and had

remained a hero of romance. He was a natural son whom the unfortunate general Lally caused to be brought up mysteriously under the name of Trophime. He learned in the self-same day the names of his father and mother, and that his father was about to perish. His youth, gloriously devoted to the vindication of his father's memory, gained for him the interest of everybody and the dying benediction of Voltaire. As a member of the States-General, Lally contributed to conciliate the minority of the nobility to the Third-Estate. But, from that moment, he confesses that the great movement of the Revolution inspired him with a kind of terror and amazement. At its very first step, it wandered surprisingly from the two-fold ideal he had in view. That poor Lally, assuredly the most inconsistent of kind-hearted men, meditated, at the same time, two things very dissimilar, the English constitution, and a paternal government. On two very serious occasions, he injured, whilst wishing to serve the king whom he adored. I have spoken of the 23rd of July, when his inconsiderate eloquence marred a very valuable opportunity for the king to win over the people to his cause. In November, another opportunity occurred, and Lally marred it again: Mirabeau wanted to serve the king, and aimed at the ministry; Lally, with his usual tact, chose that moment to publish a book against Mirabeau.

He had then retired to Lausanne. The terrible scene of October had too deeply wounded his weak and susceptible imagination. Mounier, menaced, and really in danger, left the Assembly at the same time.

The defection of those two men did us an incalculable harm throughout Europe, which looked upon Mounier as the Reason, the Minerva of the Revolution. He had forestalled it in Dauphiné, and had been its organ in its most serious act, the oath in the Tennis-court. And Lally, the good, the kind-hearted Lally, the idol of every heart, dear to women, and dear to families for the defence of his father; Lally, at the same time a popular orator and a royalist, who had inspired the hope of ending the Revolution by the king, comes forward now to tell the world that it is ruined for ever, that royalty is lost and liberty annihilated; that the king is the captive of the Assembly, and the Assembly of the people. This French-



man adopts the motto of the enemy of France, the words of Pitt : " The French will have merely passed through liberty." Ridicule is heaped on France ; and England is henceforth the only ideal of the world ; the balance of the three powers is the only true policy ; and Lally proclaims this dogma " with Lyeurgus and Blackstone."

His pamphlet, ridiculous at bottom, eloquent and impassioned in form, excellent in style, and characterised by good tradition, abundance, plenitude, and an effusion of the heart, was to accuse, dishonour his native land, and, if possible, to destroy his mother . . . Yes, the same man who devoted one-half of his life to vindicate his father's memory, gives the rest to the impious and parricidal work of destroying his mother,—France.

The memorial addressed by Lally to his constituents (January, 1790) affords the first example of those exaggerated representations, which foreigners have not ceased to make since, of the violent actions of the Revolution. The pages written on this subject by Lally, were copied, fact for fact, and even word for word, by all subsequent writers. The self-styled constitutional party began, from that time, the most unjust of injuries against France, going from province to province, and asking the nobles and priests, " What have you suffered ? " Then, without any examination or control, and without any documents or witnesses being produced, they write and certify. The people, the fated and necessary victim, after suffering for ages, suffered still in their day of reaction. Their pretended friends cagerly register all their misdeeds, whether true or false ; they receive the most suspected witnesses ; and believe everything against them.

Lally marches first, as the leader of the band. By him commences the great funeral concert of mourners, who will weep over France . . . Ye mourners of the king and the nobility, who keep your pity for them, but show none for the millions of men who suffered and perished also, tell us what rank, what escutcheon one must have to move your compassion. For our part, we had thought that to deserve the tears of mankind it was sufficient to be man.

Thus, the grand movement of pity was set in motion against the only people that sincerely desired the happiness of mankind.



That pity became an instrument of war, a murderous machine ; and the world was cruel in proportion to its compassion. Lally and the other mourners fomented against us a crusade of nations and kings, and east France, worried by them all, into the homieidal necessity of the Reign of Terror. Exterminating pity ! which cost the lives of millions of men. That flood of tears that they had in their eyes has caused torrents of blood to flow in war.

We may imagine with what inward delight, what a smile of complacency, England learned from the best and most kind-hearted Frenchmen, *the true friends of liberty*, that France was a country unworthy of liberty,—a giddy passionate people, who, through weakness of intellect, were easily led into crime,—rough malevolent children, who spoil and break everything they touch . . . Indeed, they would shatter the world to pieces, if wise England were not there to chastise them.

The chances were not equal in this suit before the world, between the Revolution and her Anglo-French accusers. They called to witness disorders that were too visible ; and the Revolution pointed out what was not yet seen, the persevering treachery of her enemies ; the intimate cordial understanding between the Tuileries, the emigrants, and foreigners, a conspiracy of traitors at home and abroad. But they denied, and swore, and called heaven to witness . . . Thus to suspect and calumniate, was therefore the greatest injustice ! . . . Yet those innocent men who thus protested, returned in 1815 and stated publicly that they were guilty, boasted of it, and gloried in it.

Yes, at the present day we can, on their own testimony, safely affirm. The Neekers and Lallys were fools and simpletons, when they guaranteed what time has so flatly contradicted . . . Yes, simpletons, but in their silliness, there was corruption ; those weak and vain-minded men had been soured by disappointments, and corrupted by the caresses, the flattery, and the fatal friendship of the enemies of France.

Revolutionary France, that people have believed to have been so violent, was indeed very patient. At Paris, they were everywhere printing and exhibiting, in the Rue Saint-Jacques and the Rue de la Harpe, the books of traitors, Calonne's, for instance, admirably executed, at the expense of

the Court ; and Burke's furious and filthy libel, as violent as Marat's, and, if we think of the results, far more homicidal !

That book, which is so full of fury that the author forgets at every page what he has just said in the former, blindly choking himself with his own arguments, reminds me every moment of the end of Mirabeau-Tonneau, who died through his own violence, rushing blind with fury upon the sword of an officer whom he was forcing to draw.

That excess of fury which is in an agony at not being able to find sufficient vent in words, casts the author every moment into that vile buffoonery which degrades even the buffoon : " We Englishmen have not been emptied, sewed up, and stuffed, like birds in a museum, with straw, or rags, or filthy paper-chippings, called the Rights of Man." And, in another place : " The Constituent Assembly is composed of village attorneys ; they could not fail to make a litigious constitution that may afford them plenty of excellent business."

I have, with a simplicity of which I am now ashamed, tried to discover whether that book contained any doctrine. It contains only insult and contradiction. The author says, in the same page : " The government is a work of *human* wisdom ;" and, a few lines further : " Man must be limited by something *beyond man*." By what, then ? By an angel, a god, or a pope ? Return then at once to the marvellous governments of the middle ages, and to politics of miracles.

The most amusing thing in Burke, is his eulogy of monks. That is a subject on which he is never tired of expatiating. This pupil of Saint-Omer, converted to arrive at power, seems to remember (rather late) his good masters, the Jesuits. Protestant England is affected to the heart for them, by her hatred of us. The Revolution contains something good since it brings together and reconciles such ancient enemies. Pitt would go even to mass. All of them, Englishmen and monks, tune their voices in unison, as soon as ever the question is to sing sanguinary vespers for France, and chant in the same choir.

Burke's pamphlet was avowed by Pitt ; for the latter wanted to create an eternal breach between the two nations, and widen and deepen the strait.

The animosity of the English towards France had been, till

then, an instinctive sentiment, capricious and variable ; but from that time, it became an object of systematic culture, which admirably succeeded. It increased and flourished.

The ground was well prepared. Sismondi (by no means unfavourable to the English, and who married one of their countrywomen), makes this very just remark on their history in the eighteenth century. They were the more warlike as they never made war. At least they made it neither by themselves nor in their own country. They believed themselves unattackable ; thence a security of egotism, which hardened their hearts, rendering them violent, insolent, and irritable towards whatever withstood them. The chastisement of this spiteful disposition, was the progress of hatred, the sad facility with which they allowed themselves to be led by the great and rich of their nation, into every folly which hatred inspires.

The good qualities of that laborious, serious, thoughtful people, all turned to evil. One virtue, unknown on the continent, and which has, we must say, often been of good service to their men, Pitt, Nelson, and others, —their *doggedness*, — being thus directed, was a sort of madness, the causeless fury of the bull-dog that bites without knowing what he bites, and never lets go his hold.

For my part, that sad sight does not inspire me with hatred in return. No, rather compassion ! O, sister nation, nation of Newton and Shakspeare, who would not feel pity in beholding you fallen into this base credulity, this cowardly deference for our common enemies, —the aristocrats, —so far as to accept literally and receive with respect and confidence, whatever the nobleman, the gentleman, the lord, has told you against people whose cause was your own ? Your miserable prejudice in favour of those who trample you under foot, has done us much harm, but it has ruined you !

Oh ! you can never know how the heart of France yearned towards you ! When, in May, 1790, one of our deputies, speaking of England, thought proper to say : “ Our rival, our enemy : ” he received the universal disapprobation of the Assembly. They were on the point of abandoning Spain, in order not to show themselves distrustful of their friends the English.

All this happened in 1790, whilst the English ministry and

the opposition, united together, were publishing Burke's pamphlet against us.

The effect of that paltry piece of declamation on the English was immense. The clubs that had been formed in London to support the principles of our Revolution, were for the most part dissolved. The liberal Lord Stanhope erased his name from their books (November, 1790). Numerous publications, cleverly directed, multiplied *ad infinitum*, and sold cheap among the people, turned them so completely, that, the 14th of July, 1791, on an English meeting celebrating at Birmingham the anniversary of the taking of the Bastile, the furious populace went and ransacked, broke, and burnt Priestly's house and furniture, together with his chemical laboratory. He left his ungrateful country, and went over to America.

Such was the *fête* they gave in England to the friend of France; and, in the same year, this is what was given in France to the English.

In December, 1791, our Jacobins, who then had the Girondists, Isnard, and Lasource, for their presidents, resolved that the three flags of France, England, and the United States, should be suspended from the roofs of their hall, and the busts of Price and Sidney placed beside those of Jean Jacques, Rousseau, Mirabeau, Mably, and Franklin.

They gave the place of honour to an Englishman deputed from the London clubs; and addressed to him the most affectionate congratulations, with prayers for eternal peace. But the union would have seemed imperfect, if our mothers and wives, those mediators of the heart, had not come to marry the nations by placing them hand in hand. They brought an affecting pledge of alliance,—the work of their own hands; they and their daughters had themselves woven for the Englishman three flags, a cap of liberty, and the national cockade.

All that was put into an ark of alliance, together with the Constitution, the new map of France, fruits of the land of France, and ears of corn.

Holy confidence of our fathers! . . . Will any one call it credulous and blind? . . . No, they must have had this belief; they must have believed that the English people would comprehend the interest of nations; they were not able to guess,

and I congratulate them for it, that the English, dragged along in their miserable bondage of hatred and pride, would allow themselves to be yoked by their aristocracy to their machine of industry, to gain and gain for ever what would serve them for nothing but to purchase Germans and Russians as fast as they were killed.

People of pride do not believe me in this matter ; but believe yourselves. Examine, and compare what you were, with what you have become !

You have done great things both at home and abroad ; yet what are the results ?

Is it the happiness of the many ? Be bold and answer—*Yes*.

Is it the progress of the few, the elevation of genius, the culture of deep thought ? I doubt it. You produce nothing as a new theory, but few works of arts, only articles, and translations of paltry French pieces.

You seem to me to have made a choice diametrically opposite to Solomon's. He chose mind,—wisdom. You have chosen the world. But do you hold it ? The *British Empire* is indeed a grand world ! But what is an empire ? An harmony of nations. It is a thing slowly, wisely, and firmly founded, on necessary relations, and founded especially, if it is to be lasting, on the benefits conferred by the conquerors. Such was the great Roman empire, which has covered the world with its monuments and left everywhere high roads and laws for nations. Such were not the settlements of the Venetians, Portuguese, and Dutch ; those glorious little nations, which with nothing did such immense things, have nevertheless been unable to found anything.

You have, I know well, what they had not, your triplicity of powers,—agricultural, industrial, and naval. These are certainly very powerful means. And yet how does it happen that, having them, you have succeeded so little in taking root. In no part (excepting the United States, founded at a different period, under a religious influence) in no part have you taken deep root in the earth. I see you everywhere on the surface of the globe ; but firmly rooted,—nowhere. The reason is that you have been everywhere, gathering and sucking the substance of the earth, but implanting nothing, no sympathy,



no thought. Having brought no moral idea with you, you have founded nowhere.

Your India, for instance, one of the finest empires that the sun has seen,—what have you done with it? It has withered in your hands. You remain exterior to it; you are a parasite body that will be cast off to-morrow.\* You found that marvellous country provided with commerce and agriculture . . . Yet what now remains to be exported, except opium?

But of all the English countries, the one that has suffered the most is assuredly England herself.

Here, the bankers will laugh, and so will the lords perhaps, and with them a few hundred thousand men,—the vampires of England . . . Yes, but twenty millions of men are weeping, and those men are England herself!

There is no instance of a people so indefatigable and industrious, having, after the most desperate efforts, maintained for fifty years, purchased only misery and famine.

It was the opinion of Europe in 1789, and one that Burke publicly professed: "That in England property was divided more equally than in France;" and one of the best informed members of the Constituent Assembly observed, that at that period "most of the English are land-owners."

This was perhaps an exaggeration. But, what is certain, is, that small landed-proprietors were then innumerable; that one met everywhere with the modest and quiet cottage, that humble yet charming habitation, which, exhibited to us so many times in novels and engravings, had made us all in love with England; add, moreover, the affecting accessories of a quiet, homely, moral, and laborious life, the Bible read in the family circle, the virgin vine and the rose-tree overhanging the low porch, the handsome yet serious girl spinning on the threshold amidst her young brothers, and the sports of those

\* No Englishman goes to India to settle there; and there is no marriage with the natives. The English will one day depart, without leaving any vestige, except the annihilation of Indian trade and industry, the decline of agriculture, &c. I derive this last particular from the book of Björnstierna, the Swedish author, who is, however, a great friend of the English. I ought to say on this occasion that nothing will be found in this chapter that is not derived either from English inquiries, or from books impartial or even favourable to England, such as M. Léon Faucher's remarkable work from which I have obtained information more than once.



fine children, vying in colour with the carnation, and full of life. Oh! many years ago, I still saw something like this in the best preserved districts of England, and I was so affected by it as to forget our wars, and, I confess, to rejoice that the invasion had not taken place, nor gone to trouble that peaceful world . . . I thanked the ocean!

I was wrong. The invasion would have saved England. It would at least have forced her to stop and reflect on the brink of the terrible abyss into which she has blindly plunged. It would have forced the aristocracy to grant something to the people, to relax somewhat of their barbarous obstinacy. Let us add one word to make this more evident. Landed property, entirely aristocratical, as we know, contributed in 1700 one-sixth of the public expenditure, one-ninth in 1793, but only one twenty-fourth from 1816 to 1842! The rich paid less and less, the poor more and more, and slaved more and more. At the peace, strange to say, the aristocracy granted relief only to itself, none to the people who had so heroically laboured, and supplied by their mortal labour the forty billions required by the long war.

What a terrible tax on hatred, pride, and the mad spirit of rivalry!

Go on, John Bull, keep up the game, thy honour is staked not to give it up. Work, pay, and double thy stakes, thou obstinate gamester.

Rule, Britannia, rule! . . . Work, work thyself to the bone! Rule, Britannia! And add to thy work two hours more,—four hours, nay meal time, and the hours of rest! Friend, add moreover thy wife and children, and, by way of loan, add also the work of thy children unborn, and who will be born poor and bent double with debts . . . Rule, Britannia! and die, all of you, in order that France may die!

Alas! you unfortunate, obstinate people, much good have you done yourselves with your hatred and scorn; and all that on the word of your enemies and ours.

I have wept bitter tears over the miseries of our enemies . . . Indeed how can we help weeping when we see the best part of England, her moral treasure, the family, annihilated! I speak not of those monstrous Babels of manufactories, where prostitution has ceased from very exhaustion. I allude to the agricultural

districts. What is more lamentable than to meet, in the fields, on the richest estates in the world, those mendicant labourers, working in a dress-coat, wearing the cast-off clothes of the rich ; to meet on the roads crowds of children, sold and hired, transported from one county to another in harvest time, to work the ground by the day,—all together pell-mell, girls and boys, a filthy troop, miserably piled up in waggon !

This warfare against infancy is atrocious ! Yet such is the spectacle now presented by England. The burden which went on falling from the rich upon the poor, from man to woman, falls from her upon the child. The child, worn out and corrupted before his existence, cannot live. Under this lugubrious spectacle of juvenile misery and promiscuous intercourse, there is a terrible sentence, more than the end of a society,—the extermination of a race !

No remedy will cure this. England will neither be willing nor able to alter. Electoral reform has made no difference ; neither has the Income-tax ; and Free-trade will not succeed any better : food will become cheaper, but wages will lower.

How should the material change ? The soul has remained ever the same. Far from diminishing by the excess of misery, the national malady, that satanical spirit of pride, does but increase.\* Not one of them would wish for equality ; they are all aristocratical in heart. This prodigious hard-heartedness is a terrible spectacle.

Wealth is ever going on concentrating itself in fewer hands. The progressive diminution of wages, and the dearness of provisions, go on prolonging work, excluding the means of saving, and depriving the workman of the short leisure moments

\* No, there is no change in the heart of the English. Read Carlyle, one of their first,—one of their best. In that entirely imaginative and outward review that he makes of men and things, there is no solicitude about right,—the basis of ideas,—the generative link of facts. Accordingly, there is nothing organic in that book ; it is the work of an artist, but not a work of art. He looks upon the Revolution as the burial-ground in Hamlet. He takes and weighs those skulls with a bitter smile, in which there appears too often a derisive pity. This is the skull of a madman ; that of a buffoon. The word wanting is that word of the heart, "Alas, poor Yorick !" God preserve me from handling the bones of my enemies with such hardness of heart ! Why, at this very moment when I seem to be violently accusing England, the chief cause of my anger against her is that she has ruined England.

which allowed some moral culture, might raise him from his degradation, open for him the path to distinction, the road to political power, and the right to that power.

What means that immense and ridiculous distribution of bibles to a people who no longer read, have no longer any time, and often no longer any power to read? Their bible, alas! in these days, it is in the corrosive liquor which restores him for a moment, intoxicates him, and procures him oblivion. Read? Mark? Learn? These are empty, odious words: he wants to remain ignorant.

The whole hope of the aristocracy is, that those millions of men who are dying, and who are replaced only by dying children, will die at least in silence, peaceably, and without any disturbance. That population, it is true, having never been very warlike since the fifteenth century, but which formerly boasted, not without reason, of its physical strength, now feels itself feeble, attenuated, and worn out in body and soul.

I here allude to the manufacturing population in particular. As for the strong and intelligent workmen, whom England still possesses in great numbers, two things are contending against them: First, they receive no moral culture, no light from without; the clergy, even on their own lands, neglect them entirely; and the radicals, who communicated with them ten years ago, have now separated from them, and, through fear, have joined the Conservative party. Secondly, these workmen are unable to find any impulse within themselves; there being, as I have said, no time for reading and reflection.

There is another cause of decline which deserves to be examined. England's superiority long proceeded from this cause: that the men of the different classes were there less specialised than on the continent; the *gentleman*, by his strong plain food, and violent exercise, was akin to, and often stronger than the workman; and the latter, by his biblical culture, and the interest he took in public affairs, was not far removed from the gentleman. In the English navy, even at the present day, among the builders, pilots, and first-class sailors, you will find very often these two men in one,—a complete impersonation of the two classes in equilibrium, who, without being a scientific scholar (like the French engineer), has much practical knowledge, and at the same time a workman's energy. This happens

only in the navy, and in workmen of a superior order ; but the bulk of the working classes, that prodigiously numerous multitude, ever increasing, has entered a different path. The complete man, the mental and physical equilibrium, formerly common in that class of people, is becoming more scarce every day.

The extreme division of labour has specialised the workman, and penned him up in this or that narrow sphere, and made him a thing isolated in his action and capacity, as impotent in itself, if separated from the whole, as a wheel apart from a machine. They are no longer men, but portions of men, who link their action together, and work like a single engine. This continuing, has gradually created strange classes of men, sickening to the sight, because one perceives in them at the first glance, the ugly impress of a narrow speciality of work ; that is to say, the complete subjection of personality to some miserable detail of industry ; and from these fixed and perpetuated deformities result races, no longer the fine strong races of Britons and Saxons, but tribes of pale cotton-spinners, races of hump-backed blacksmiths, and, in the diversities of the blacksmith, secondary races, sadly characterised.

Aristotle, in his politics, says as a calculating naturalist, noting exterior signs : " The slave is an ugly man ; " and doubtless that slave of antiquity was ugly, bent, and often made hump-backed by his burden ; but yet, with all that, he varied his labour, exercised his different physical faculties, preserved in them a certain equilibrium, and remained man : he was the slave of a man. But what, alas ! shall we say of him who, bound down to some minute occupation, the same, and the same for ever, the serf of a miserable product of manufacture, is the slave of a pin, the slave of a ball of cotton, &c. &c. And then how many slaves, moreover, has this single pin, in its different parts, head, shank, point, &c., who, doing but one single thing, must confine their activity and their mind to that measure ! Such is the great and terrible difference between the Englishman and the Frenchman.

The Englishman is a part of a man.

This part may be sometimes an admirable workman, of singular utility and efficacy ; no matter, it is still only a part.

Whatever he may do, he is relative ; he exists by relation to

one common action,—a machine—a thing. This is a life of things, not a life of man. Man, personality (except the voluntary relations which it gives itself and chooses for itself), is an absolute being—a God.

Society, far from being an education for the Englishman, or adding qualities to his nature, has even taken from him that basis which bears qualities, and forms their substratum—the integrity of being.

For the Frenchman, on the contrary, it has strengthened the fundamental unity; and, through all our misfortunes, moral miseries, and others, it has constantly endowed, augmented, and strengthened him, as a complete man.\*

The French peasant, as a soldier, a small landed proprietor, under various denominations, has become man more and more.

At a moment when these two peoples were about to begin the double and terrible task into which fatality impelled them—mortal labour and mortal warfare—my heart had need to anticipate the result. On entering upon those immense sufferings, it was necessary to have this to comfort me on the road: I will repeat this viaticum along my painful journey, and shall

\* I have explained myself at greater length on this subject in my book, *The People*. We also have, doubtless, the evil in our industrial system; but, thank heaven, in a less and very minute proportion. France has an agricultural basis, which is very extensive and very steady. The degeneration attached to manufacturing industry, is to be found among us only in four or five departments, and again in only certain parts of these departments. We by no means desire that an exaggerated protection should extend manufacture; it is, so to speak, a premium for the destruction of the race. A fine result for a nation to have increased its pecuniary capital, by ruining its human capital, which is the nation itself. Only imagine a nation ever going on developing the exterior and the accessory, and diminishing its substance in proportion. I know not whether it would become rich; but I know that, in a certain time, there would be no longer any men to possess, at least, no men in the true sense of the word. Political economy will, sooner or later, be placed upon its true basis, of which nobody has yet spoken. Its aim is not riches; even comfort is a secondary consideration, the more completely acquired when the aim is higher. The aim of political economy, and all policy, is *to make men*,—men intelligent, benevolent, courageous, and robust. This is riches, in the highest sense of the word; and every kind of industry has a right to encouragement just in proportion as it attains this end. The manufacturer considers the produce; but the state beholds the producer; and it ought to judge industry in an *educational point of view*, according as it makes or unmakes races of men.



find more strength to traverse and relate so many agonising things.

I will not compare here those two kinds of labour, industry and war, nor calculate whether it be nobler to pour forth one's blood or the sweat of one's brow. No, I will draw no distinction ; both sides have fought the good fight, one in labour, the other in battle. These two people have been great.

I merely make this remark ; and this, perhaps, after so many events, bloodshed and tears, is what will remain in the heavenly balance :

France has hated less.

And for her reward, man here has remained man. I mean *man complete*, not specialised and mutilated, as the Englishman has become by the double effect of his specifying and exclusive genius, and the infinite division of labour which characterises his industry.

In an age of division and specification, the Englishman excels, and must excel. He is at once special and susceptible of acting subordinately to a general action. Though little sociable in heart, he is so in mind and manual labour. He excels, not as a man, but as a thing that is useful and efficacious—an excellent instrument.

In comparison with the instrument, the machine man is inferior. The variety and general equilibrium of his faculties injures and impedes him, and neutralises a part of his action, as soon as he is called to a very special work, for which the instrument is expressly made.

The living tool is not subject to absence of mind : he goes straight on ; and, without any musing, works with desperate energy. Wonderful to behold ! an impassioned, over-excited, over-fed tool, using all the resources of an excess of alimentation and an excess of drink, to execute eagerly, energetically, and with sustained energy, the task imposed upon him, the thought of another.

The manufacturer, the contractor of every denomination, will most assuredly prefer this man-machine. Let not the Frenchman attempt to offer himself in competition ; he is a man, and, for that very reason, displeases ; all the qualities which would render him worthy the consideration of the politician and the military man, tell here against him.



Come and behold a sight that will convince you by ocular proof, a sight, alas! most cruelly instructive. Behold them both, the Englishman and the Frenchman, together at a task that least requires special men,—at the wretched labour of embankments to serve for the foundation of rail-roads.

The Englishman, better fed, more at home at his business, is able to forget everything else; he has but one idea at a time. At work, he works hard; at rest, he sleeps, never stirs. On Sunday, he is in a state of mere oblivion, absent from all his cares, buried in his gin. On holidays, you can hardly walk in the neighbourhood of the works, without treading on an Englishman.

The Frenchman, generally less paid, ill fed, and badly recruiting his strength, spends it moreover in talking, and in laughing occasionally; at the period of rest, he is still in motion, ever acting and playing. At work, he occasionally stops, reflects, and is absent—absent from this dust and absorbed by his own ideas.

Oh! he has reason to reflect! He is moving the soil of France, which is stirring up history itself. That history is slumbering in the earth, but it is ever awake in his heart. How can this man help reflecting? He knows, too well, in handling the pickaxe, that his father handled the sword. More than one still preserves, among his wretched tattered clothes, as a paternal souvenir, the old woollen epaulets of Marengo or Austerlitz. He feels he is noble; you cannot alter him; in vain would you try to degrade him. The soul of the poor Frenchman, though fallen, still remains like a great deserted manor, haunted by two phantoms, the soul of the Revolution and the soul of the Grand-Army.

The other is not absent; that I allow; and he makes the better workman. What should he remember? His father worked hard; he made his rough campaigns at the cotton-manufactories of Manchester, or at the forges of Wolverhampton. But with all his work, with all his industrious, meritorious, and productive life, what has he left of himself to occupy the memory? No entire work ever left his hands bearing a lasting impress of its creator. He had been a mere wheel, a secondary spring of a production of which he knew

neither the whole nor the seope ; he was a part of a man, and made parts of things. He is dead ; did he ever live ?

His son is nothing more. His race having been profoundly specialised, for several generations, he works the better, as his personality, denuded of the faculties useless to his trade, scarcely ever intervenes, and hardly ever troubles him. It is thus the bee constructs, and thus the hound hunts in a pack.

Should any unexpected situation arise, any of those that require that a man should be immediately man, should think, act, form a decision, you will soon see the difference. The Englishman will remain motionless ; for how indeed should he act ? That is not his business. All those who have seen their soldiers and ours at work, in battle, in camping, or foraging, can well judge of this. And yet theirs are special soldiers, or rather, military workmen, dearly paid and fed, who, as workmen in this kind, ought to be better trained to a soldier's duty than a soldier chosen among a whole people, like the French soldier.

The mixture of two kinds of men, so dissimilar, in our public works, is a great injustice, inasmuch as the excessive and confined speciality of the Englishman (his inferiority as a man) tells in his favour as a superiority.

It is as absurd as cruel to place the Frenchman under the orders of a foreigner who knows but little or nothing of our language, and to whom he can neither explain himself nor complain.

It is immoral to place a sober man (at least relatively speaking) under the direction of a thing brutalised by gin : several of them are never free from intoxication.

But impious, thrice impious, is it to behold a Frenchman, in France, under the rod of an Englishman ! The son of the Grand Army under a serf whose father made nothing but calico, or something still more trivial.

It is the most sacred duty of public authority to interfere in these indignities. Interest, the freedom of industry, and all such grand words, are of no use in this matter. What do we care for your rail-roads, if they be a means of rushing only into infamy ? The foreigner, they reply, imports capital . . . But what, if he exports honour ?

This is something of far more consequence than any material

loss ; it is a lessening of the soul, a shrinking of the heart, an inward abasement which would gradually annihilate indignation and self-esteem ; people would learn to admire none but others and to despise themselves. A heavy responsibility for those who would place us on that road ! To surrender a fortress or a port, would be a great act of treason ; what then is it to surrender the soul of France !

Who know the value of that soul ? It is more than the soul of a nation. Among all our miseries, it is still, in the degeneracy of Europe, the vital flame that will rekindle all the rest.

The old South of Europe, powerless, is meditating a Catholic liberty. The soul of Germany had become enervated in generalisation ; the soul of England shrunk into practical specification. The German seems a formula, the Englishman a tool.

But we can say to the Frenchman : Thou art still a man !

## CHAPTER IV.

### MASSACRE AT NANCY (AUGUST 31, 1790).

The Priest and the Englishman have been the temptation of France.—Good understanding between the Royalists and Constitutionalists.—M. de Lafayette, the king of the citizen-class, an Anglo-American.—Agitated state of the army.—Irritation of the officers and soldiers.—Persecution of the Vaudois regiment at Châteauevieux.—Lafayette, sure of the Assembly and the Jacobins, agrees with Bouillé, and authorises him to strike a blow.—The soldiers are provoked (August 26th, 1790).—Bouillé marches on Nancy, refuses every condition, and gives rise to a battle (August 31st).—Massacre of the abandoned Vaudois. The rest put to death, or sent to the galleys. The king and the Assembly return thanks to Bouillé.—Loustalot dies of grief (September).

“AND even though they were a hundred thousand English (*Goddems*) more than they are, they should not gain the kingdom.” This vigorous reply of the Maid of Orleans, was uttered from the heart of France. She has never varied as to the eternal enemy.

To which the France of the Revolution has very justly added The Priest.

Stop any man in the street, the most illiterate and ignorant, who knows little or nothing of the past, and ask him what at all times has caused the ruin of this country; he will answer in his rough earnest language: "The priests (*Calotins*) and the English (*Goddems*)."

The great wits of this age, people far above the vulgar, will shrug up their shoulders and exclaim: prejudice, passion, old popular tradition!—Yes, old, but true, and it will be the new one; a little study drives one from it, but much study brings one back to it. All history is in its favour.

I was obliged to dwell long on this subject; but this proximity will abridge my history. A thousand difficulties will now be explained to us beforehand. We will not extend our hatred to the innocent populations that our two enemies have excited against us.

The general obstacle in our Revolution, as in all others, was egotism and fear. But the special obstacle which historically characterises ours, is the persevering hatred with which it has been hunted throughout the earth by the priest and the Englishman. A hatred fatal in warfare, still more so in peace, and murderous in friendship. We feel it still. ✓

They have been for us not only a persecution, but what is still more destructive, a temptation.

To the simple, credulous crowd, to woman and the peasant, the priest has given the opium of the middle ages, troubling the mind with wicked dreams. The citizen has drunk English opium, with all its ingredients of egotism, well-being, comfort, and liberty without sacrifice; a liberty that would result from a mechanical equilibrium, without the soul playing any part therein, the monarchy without virtue, as explained by Montesquieu; to *guarantee* without improving, to *guarantee*, egotism especially.

Such was the temptation.

As for the persecution, it is this entire history which must relate it. It begins by a shower of pamphlets, on either side of the channel,—by printing falsehood. It will presently continue by a no less frightful emission of forgeries of another kind, base coin, counterfeit assignats. There was no mystery: the great manufactory was public at Birmingham.

These lies, calumnies, and absurd accusations, like a swarm,

of noxious insects brought by the wind in summer, had a two-fold result : first, like so many millions of wasps, they goaded the Revolution into fury and madness ; and, secondly, they obscured the truth, and so darkened the light of day that many who had been considered clear-sighted, were groping in the blaze of noon.

The faint-hearted, who till then had marched forward by impulse and sentiment, without principles, lost their way and began to inquire : “ Where are we ? Whither are we going ? ” The shop-keeper began to entertain doubts about a Revolution which caused his customers to emigrate ; and the *bourgeois*, with his regular domestic habits, called away from his home every minute, by the roll of the drum, tired out and irritated, “ wanted to see the end of it.” In this, entirely like Louis XVI., he would have sacrificed an interest, a throne, if necessary, rather than his habits.

This state of irritation, this need of repose and peace at any price, led astray the citizen-class, and M. De Lafayette, the king of the citizens, so far as to make a disastrous mistake, which had an incalculable influence on subsequent events.

It is no easy matter to lay aside one’s ideas, prejudices, and habits of rank. M. De Lafayette, after having been for some time transported beyond his ideas by the movement of the Revolution, became gradually once more the Marquis De Lafayette. He wanted to please the queen and gain her goodwill ; and there is very little reason to doubt that he was also desirous of pleasing Madame De Lafayette, an excellent woman, but a bigot, and as such addicted to retrograde ideas, always having mass said in her chapel by a priest who had not taken the civic oath. To these domestic family influences, add his entirely aristocratic relationship, his cousin M. de Bouillé, his friends, all great lords, and lastly his staff, composed of nobles and burgess aristocracy. Under a firm and reserved exterior, he was not the less gained over, and in course of time changed by these counter-revolutionary acquaintances. A stronger mind than his would not have been able to withstand the trial. The confederation at the Field of Mars completed his infatuation. A multitude of those honest people who had heard so much of Lafayette in their provinces, and had then the happiness of beholding him, afforded the most ridiculous spectacle :



they literally adored the man, kissing his hands and his boots.

Nothing is more sensitive and irritable than an idol of the people, and the situation itself abounded with causes of irritation, being full of contrasts and violent alternatives. This god, in the vicissitudes of those riotous times, was obliged to turn superintendent of police, and even gendarme in cases of necessity ; it once happened, that not being obeyed, he was obliged to arrest a man with his own hand, and lead him to prison. The great and sovereign authority which would have encouraged Lafayette and supported him in these difficulties, was that of Washington ; but it entirely failed him. Washington, as is well known, was the head of the party that wanted to strengthen the unity of the government in America. Jefferson, the leader of the opposition party, had much encouraged the progress of our revolution ; but Washington, notwithstanding his extreme discretion, did not conceal from Lafayette his wish that he would halt. The Americans, saved by France, and fearful of being led by her too far against the English, had found it prudent to concentrate their gratitude upon individuals — Lafayette and Louis XVI. Few of them understood our situation, and many took part with the king against France. One thing, moreover, of which we had not thought, but which injured their trade, caused them to cool,—a decree of the Assembly on oil and tobacco.

The Americans, though so resolute against England in every affair of interest, are weak and partial towards her in questions of ideas. English literature is ever their literature ; and the pernicious pamphlet warfare carried on by the English against us, influenced the Americans, and through them Lafayette. At least, they did not support him in his primitive republican aspirations. He postponed this grand ideal, and fell back, at least provisionally, to English ideas—to a certain Anglo-American spurious eclectism. Besides, he himself, though American in ideas, was English by education, and a little so even in figure and appearance

For this English provisional state of things, this system of democratical royalty or *royal democracy*, which, said he, was good only for some twenty years, he took a decisive step, which seemed to check the Revolution, but which really impelled it forwards.



Let us resume preceding events.

As early as the winter of 1790 the army was being tampered with in two ways at once : on one hand, by the patriotic societies ; on the other, by the Court, by the officers who attempted, as we have seen, to persuade the soldiers that they had been insulted by the National Assembly.

In February, the Assembly increased the pay a few deniers ; yet in May, the soldiers had not received any part of that augmentation ; it became entirely insignificant, being almost wholly employed for an imperceptible increase of rations of bread.

It was a long expectation, and no result ; and the soldiers believed they were cheated. For a long time past they had accused the officers of a want of consideration in not giving any account of the cash belonging to the regiments. What is certain is, that the officers were at the best very negligent accountants, very remiss, averse to writing, and bad calculators. In late years especially, during the general languor of the old administration, military accounts appear to have been no longer in existence. To quote one regiment : M. du Châtelet, colonel of the king's regiment, being at once accountant and inspector, neither kept accounts nor inspected.

"The soldiers," says M. de Bouillé, "formed committees, chose deputies, who laid before their superiors, at first moderately enough, their claims for the pay that had been kept back . . . *Their claims were just* ; and they received justice." He adds that they then made others which were unjust and *exorbitant*. How can he know ? With such an irregular system of keeping accounts, who was able to calculate ?

Brest and Nancy were the principal scenes of this strange dispute, in which the officer, the noble, the gentleman, was accused as a swindler.

The officers recriminated both violently and cruelly. Strong in their position as chiefs, and in their superiority in fencing, their insolence to the soldiers and to the burgesses friendly to the soldiery knew no bounds. They did not fight with the soldiers, but set on them fencing-masters and hired bullies, who, sure of their superior science, gave them the choice of exposing themselves to certain death, or of declining, receiving a bloody nose, and becoming a laughing-stock. One was discovered at Metz,

who, disguised by the officers, and paid by them so much per head, used to go about at night, dressed now as a National Guard, now as a citizen, insulting and wounding, or killing the soldiers. And whoever refused to encounter that infallible sword, was next morning placarded, and laughed at, as a subject of amusement and ridicule at the barracks.

The soldiers at length found out and caught this rogue, whom they forced to tell the names of the officers who lent him his clothes. They did no harm to him, but merely scouted him with a paper cap and his name—*Iscariot*.

The officers, being discovered, crossed the frontier, and, like so many others, entered the bodies of troops which Austria was directing towards Brabant.

Thus the natural division was effected: the soldier drawing closer to the people, and the officer to foreigners.

The confederations were a fresh occasion for this division to display itself. The officers did not attend them.

They threw off the mask once more when the oath was required. After being imposed by the Assembly, delayed, taken against their will, and by several with a derisive flippancy, it did but add contempt to the hatred which the soldiers felt for their commanders. And they remained debased by it.

Such was the state of the army and its intestine warfare. And foreign warfare was likewise imminent. In July, the news spread that the king had granted a passage to the Austrians marching to stifle the Revolution in the Low-Countries. Was it a passage or a residence? . . . Who knew whether they would halt, whether Leopold, the brother-in-law, would not take up a fraternal abode at Mézières or at Givet? . . . The population of the Ardennes, feeling no confidence in an army so disorganised, and in Bouillé its commander, were resolved to defend themselves. Thirty thousand National Guards put themselves in motion, and marched against the Austrians, when they suddenly heard that the National Assembly had refused the passage.

The officers, on the contrary, by no means concealed before the soldiers the joy they felt at the approach of the foreign army. Somebody having asked whether the Austrians were really arriving: "Yes," said an officer, "they are coming, and to chastise you."

Meanwhile duelling continued and increased in a frightful manner, being used, as at Lille, for the purging of the army. Every advantage was taken of the disputes and idle rivalries which often rise between different bodies of troops without anybody knowing the reason. At Nancy, two bodies of 1500 men each were going to fight together ; but a soldier rushed between them, forced them to come to an explanation, and made them sheath their swords.

Leaves of absence were given in great numbers (at the approach of the enemy!); and many soldiers were dismissed in a degrading manner, with yellow cartouche boxes.

Things were in this state when the king's regiment, which was at Nancy with two others,—Mestre-de-Camp, and Châteaueux, a Swiss regiment,—thought proper to ask its officers for a settling of accounts, and managed to get paid. This tempted the Châteaueux regiment. On the 5th of August, it deputed two soldiers to the king's regiment, to ask for information respecting the examination of the accounts. Those poor Swiss believed themselves to be Frenchmen, and wanted to do like Frenchmen ; but they were cruelly reminded that they were Swiss. Their officers, in the terms of the capitulations, were their supreme judges for life and death : officers, judges, lords, and masters ; some, patricians of the sovereign towns of Berne and Fribourg ; others, feudal lords of Vaud and other subject countries who inflicted upon their vassals all the contempt they received from Berne.

This proceeding of their soldiers appeared to them three-fold criminal ; as soldiers, subjects, and vassals, they could never be too severely punished. The two envoys were shamefully flogged in open parade. The French officers looked on in admiration, and complimented the Swiss officers for their inhumanity.

They had not reflected how the army might take this affair. The indignation was extreme ; for the French felt every blow inflicted upon the Swiss.

That regiment of Châteaueux was, and deserved to be, dear to the army and to France. It was the same that, on the 14th of July, 1789, encamped in the Field of Mars when the Parisians went to take arms at the Invalids, declared that it would never fire on the people. Its refusal evidently paralysed Besenval, and left Paris free to march against the Bastille.

We need not wonder at this. The Swiss of that regiment were not natives of German Switzerland, but men from the country of Vaud, and the environs of Lausanne and Geneva. Who are more truly French than they?

Ye men of Vaud, friends of Geneva and Savoy, we had given you Calvin, and you have given us Rousseau! Let this be the seal of an eternal alliance between us. You declared yourselves our brethren at the dawn of our first day, at the truly awful moment, when nobody was able to foresee the victory of liberty.

The French went and took the two Swiss beaten in the morning, dressed them in their clothes and caps, promenaded them through the town, and forced the Swiss officers to pay to each of them a hundred louis by way of indemnity.

The revolt was at first only a burst of good feeling, equity, and patriotism; but, the ice having been once broken—the officers having been once threatened, and forced to pay, other acts of violence soon followed.

The officers, instead of leaving the cash-boxes of the regiments at the quarters, where they ought to have been, according to the regulations, had placed them at the treasurer's, and said insultingly that they would have them guarded by patrols (*maréchaussée*) as from thieves. The soldiers, by way of retaliation, said they were afraid the officers might carry off the cash-boxes in deserting to the enemy. They took them back to the quarters; and found they were nearly empty. This became a new cause of accusation. The soldiers made the officers give them what was owing them—sums with which the French treated the Swiss, and the Swiss the French, as well as the poor of the town.

These military orgies occasioned no serious disturbance, if we may believe the testimony of the National Guards of Nancy to the Assembly. Nevertheless, they appeared somewhat alarming; and the state of things evidently required a speedy remedy. But neither the Assembly, nor Lafayette understood what it was necessary to do.

What they ought to have perceived at once, was that the usual course of proceeding was altogether inapplicable. The army was no longer an army; but two peoples face to face, two hostile peoples, the nobles and the non-nobles. These non-nobles,—the soldiers,—had conquered by the Revolution; for

it had been made on their account. To believe that the conquerors would continue to obey the conquered, who moreover insulted them, was absolute nonsense. Very many officers had already gone over to the enemy; and such as remained had deferred or declined taking the civic oath. It was really doubtful whether the army could, without peril, obey the friends of the enemy.

There was but one reasonable and practicable course,—the one advised by Mirabeau: To dissolve the army, and compose it anew. The war was not so imminent as to prevent there being time to perform this operation. The obstacle, the grand impediment, was that the great ones of that day, Mirabeau himself, Lafayette, the Lameths, — all those revolutionary nobles, would hardly have appointed any officers but such as were of noble birth. Prejudice and tradition were still too strong in favour of the latter: no military spirit was attributed to the lower classes; neither did they suspect what a multitude of true nobles there were among the people.

It was Lafayette who, by means of his friend Emmery, the deputy, urged the Assembly into the false and violent measures which it took against the army, making itself a party, and not the judge: a party in favour of the counter-revolution.

On the 6th of August, Lafayette caused a decree to be proposed by Emmery and adopted by the Assembly, that, in order to verify the accounts kept by the officers, the king would appoint inspectors *chosen among the officers*, that no degrading *congé* should be inflicted upon the soldiers till after a judgment according to the ancient forms, that is to say, *given by the officers*. The soldier had his appeal to the king, that is to say, to the minister (himself an officer), or to the National Assembly, which was no doubt to lay aside its immense labours to listen to the complaints of the soldiers!

This decree was only a weapon to be kept in case of need. They next hastened to *strike a blow*. Decreed on the 6th, it was sanctioned by the king on the 7th, and on the 8th M. de Lafayette wrote to M. de Bouillé who was to *strike the blow*. It is the very expression he uses, and he repeats it several times.\*

\* *Mémoires de Lafayette*, letter of August 18th, 1790, Vol. III., p. 135. I regret that the French and Swiss historians have generally either omitted or disfigured this affair of the Châteaueux regiment.



Lafayette was by no means a sanguinary man. In this matter, we are not attacking his disposition, but his intelligence.

He imagined that this violent but necessary blow would restore order for ever ; and order once restored would at length enable him to establish and put in practice the grand constitutional machine, *royal democracy*, which he looked upon as his own work, and admired and defended with an author's partiality.

And this first act, so useful to the constitutional government, was about to be performed by the enemy of the constitution, M. de Bouillé, who had deferred taking the oath as long as he had been able, and was now galled by it,—a man who was personally irritated against the soldiers, who had so lately paid no attention to his orders, and had forced him to pay them a part of what was owing to them. Was such a man the calm, impartial, disinterested person to whom such a measure of severity might be intrusted ? Was it not to be feared that it might serve as an opportunity for a personal revenge ?

M. de Bouillé says himself, that he had a secret plan : To allow the greater part of the army to become disorganised, and to keep apart a few select troops, especially foreigners, in strict discipline. It is evident that with the latter the others could have been overpowered.

In order to employ such a man in full security, without compromising himself, Lafayette applied directly to the Jacobins, and frightened their leaders with the peril of a vast military insurrection. Singular to relate, the Jacobin deputies, whose emissaries had contributed not a little to excite the soldiers to rebel, nevertheless voted against them in the National Assembly: all the coercive decrees being voted *unanimously*.

The Court was so emboldened that it did not fear to intrust to Bouillé the command of the troops throughout the Eastern frontier, from Switzerland to the Sambre. These troops, it is true, were hardly to be trusted. He was able to rely confidently on only twenty battalions of infantry (Germans or Swiss) ; but he had a great quantity of horse, twenty-seven squadrons of German huzzars, and thirty-three of French cavalry. Moreover, orders were issued to every administrative body to aid and support him in every way, especially by the National Guard.



Lafayette, in order to make the thing more sure, wrote *fraternally* to these National Guards, and despatched to them two of his own aid-de-camps; one of whom became aid-de-camp to Bouillé; and the other strove on one hand to lull the garrison of Nancy into security, and on the other hand to collect the National Guards that they wanted to bring against it.

Bouillé, who explains to us himself his plan of campaign, lets us into a great many secrets when he confesses "that he wanted, by means of Montmedy, to secure a communication with Luxembourg and foreigners."

In his letter of the 8th of August, Lafayette told Bouillé that they would send to Nancy, as inspector of accounts, a M. de Malseigne, an officer who had been summoned on purpose from Besançon. This was a very threatening choice. Malseigne was reckoned "the most dashing swordsman in the army,"—a very brave man, very impetuous, very provoking, and unrivalled in fencing. A strange sort of accountant! There was reason to believe that he would settle matters with his sword. Remark also that he was sent alone, as if in defiance.

Meanwhile the soldiers had written to the National Assembly; but their letter was intercepted. They then despatched a few of their own party to carry a second; but Lafayette caused these letter-carriers to be arrested as soon as they arrived at Paris.

On the contrary, they presented and read to the Assembly the accusation made against the soldiers by the municipality of Nancy, entirely devoted to the officers. Emmery boldly maintained that the affair of Châteaueux (the 5th and 6th of August) had taken place *after they had proclaimed* the decree of the Assembly which it had enacted on the 6th. The affair, thus expounded, without any mention of its date, seemed a violation of the decree, which was not violated since it was unknown at Nancy and had been made at Paris on the very same day. In like manner, an insurrection of the soldiery at Metz, which had taken place several days before the 6th, was also presented as a violation of the same decree.

By means of this artful and fraudulent explanation, the Assembly was induced to enact a violent, indignant decree, which seemed at once a condemnation of the soldiery. According to this decree, they were to declare to their commanders

their errors and their repentance, even in writing, if so required ; that is to say, to give up to the adverse party written testimony against themselves. It was decreed unanimously, without any observation : " It is urgent and vital," said Emmery ; " there is danger in the least delay."

On the 26th, Malseigne arrived at Naney, armed with the decree. Order had been restored ; but Malseigne soon occasioned trouble, dissatisfaction, and confusion. Instead of verifying, he commenced insulting. Instead of taking up his residence quietly at the Hôtel-de-Ville, he repaired to the quarters of the Swiss, and refused to give them justice in what they claimed of their chiefs. " Judge us ! " exclaimed the soldiers. He then wanted to withdraw ; but they prevented him.

Then he stepped back, drew his sword, and wounded several men. His sword broke ; he seized another, and fought his way out, calmly enough, through that furious crowd, that nevertheless respected his life.

They had, what they wanted, adequate provocation, all that might appear a violation, a contempt of the decrees of the Assembly. The Swiss were compromised in the most terrible manner. Bouillé, to give them an opportunity of aggravating their offence, sent them orders to evacuate Naney ; but to come forth, was giving themselves up, not only to Bouillé, but to their leaders and judges, or rather to their executioners ; they knew perfectly well the horrible punishment they had to expect from their officers ; so they remained in the town.

Bouillé had now nothing to do but to act. He selected and assembled three thousand infantry and fourteen hundred cavalry, almost all Germans. In order to give a somewhat more national appearance to this army of foreigners, Lafayette's aid-de-camps were beating about the country, and endeavouring to gain over the National Guards. They brought with them seven hundred, either aristocrats or Lafayettists, who followed Bouillé, and behaved with much violence and fury. But the bulk of the National Guards, about two thousand, were not to be deceived ; they felt perfectly convinced that Bouillé's side could never be that of the Revolution, and they threw themselves into Naney.

The carabineers of Luneville, among whom Malseigne had taken refuge, had also no wish to take any share in the sanguinary execution then in preparation. They themselves gave

up Malseigne to their comrades ; and this thunderbolt of war made his entrance into Nancy in a dressing-gown, nightcap, and slippers.

Bouillé behaved very strangely. He wrote to the Assembly, entreating it to send him two deputies who might help him to set matters in order ; and on the same day, without waiting for an answer, departed in person to settle them with his cannon.

On the 31st of August, the very day on which the massacre took place, that pacific letter was read to the Assembly. Emmery and Lafayette attempted to have it decreed, that "the Assembly approves whatever Bouillé is doing and may do." Luckily, a deputation from the National Guards of Nancy was there to protest ; and Barnave proposed and caused to be adopted a firm and paternal proclamation, in which the Assembly promised to judge impartially . . . Judge ! It was rather late ! . . . One of the parties had ceased to exist.

Bouillé, who had left Metz on the 28th, and Toulon on the 29th, was on the 31st close to Nancy. Three deputations at eleven in the morning, and at three and four in the afternoon, went forward to meet him and inquire his conditions. The deputies were soldiers and National Guards (Bouillé says populace, because they wore no uniforms) ; they had placed at their head some of the terrified municipal authorities, who, on joining Bouillé, were unwilling to go back, and remained with him, authorising him still more by their presence and the dread they evinced of returning to Nancy. The general's conditions were to make none, to require first that the regiments should march forth, give back their hostage,—Malseigne,—and deliver up four of their party to be judged by the Assembly. To be required to choose, betray, and themselves deliver up their own comrades, was cruel and disgraceful for the French, but horrible to the Swiss, who were very sure that they would never go to be judged by the Assembly, but that by virtue of the capitulations, their leaders would claim them to hang them, flog them to death, or break them on the wheel.

The two French regiments, the king's and the Mestre de-Camp, submitted, gave up Malseigne, and began to file out of the town. There remained the poor and scanty regiment of Châteaувieux, composed of only two battalions. A few of our

men, however, were ashamed to abandon it ; and many valiant National Guards of the environs of Nancy went likewise and generously posted themselves with the Swiss, wishing to share their fate. Uniting together, they took up their position at the Stainville gate, the only one that was fortified.

If Bouillé had been willing to spare bloodshed, he had but one course to take : to halt at a short distance, wait till the French regiments had come out, and then pour in a few troops by the other gates, thus placing the Swiss between two fires ; he would have taken them without fighting.

But, then, where was the glory ? And where was the *startling blow* which the Court and Lafayette expected from Bouillé ?

The latter relates himself two facts that tell against him : first, that he advanced within thirty paces of the gate, that is to say, he brought into contact and placed face to face two parties of Swiss, rivals and foes, who could not fail to insult and provoke one another with the mutual accusation of being traitors ; secondly, he left the head of his column to speak to some deputies whom he could very easily have sent for. His absence had the natural effect that might have been expected : they began shouting and insulting one another ; at last they fired.

Those of Nancy say that the whole affair was begun by Bouillé's huzzars ; whilst Bouillé accuses the soldiers of Châteaueux. One can hardly understand, however, how the latter, in such peril, should have thought proper to begin the provocation. They wanted to fire their cannon ; but a young officer, Désilles, a native of Brittany, as courageous as obstinate, sat down upon the lighted match ; thrown down, he hugged the mouth of the cannon (a serious incident, that enabled Bouillé's people to advance) ; they could only force him from the cannon by charging him with their bayonets.

Bouillé hastens to the spot, makes himself master of the gate, pours his huzzars into the town, through a discharge of musketry well kept up from the windows of the houses. It was evidently not the Châteaueux regiment alone that was firing, nor the National Guards of the environs alone, but the majority of the poorer class had declared in favour of the Swiss. However, the officers of the two French regiments followed Désille's example, and with better success ; they contrived to keep the

troops within the barracks. From that moment, Bouillé could not fail in reducing the town.

In the evening, order was restored ; the French regiments had left ; and half the Swiss soldiers were killed, and the rest prisoners. Such as did not immediately surrender were found murdered on the following days. Three days afterwards, another was caught and cut to pieces in the market-place,—a fact attested to by ten thousand witnesses.

After the massacre, the town beheld a still more horrid spectacle, an immense execution. The Swiss officers were not satisfied with decimating their remaining soldiers,—there would have been too few victims ; they caused twenty-one to be hanged. This atrocious deed lasted all day, and, to give a grand finish to the *fête*, the twenty-second was broken on the wheel.

What is most disgraceful and infamous for us, is, that those Neros, having condemned fifty more Swiss to the galleys, (probably all that remained alive,) we received those galley-slaves, and had the noble mission of transporting them and keeping them at Brest. These people, who had been unwilling to fire on us on the 14th of July, received, as a national reward, the penalty of dragging along a cannon-ball in France.

On the same day, August 31st, as we have said, the Assembly had made the pacific promise of giving impartial justice. It had previously voted two commissaries for an amicable arrangement. Bouillé, who had asked for them, had not awaited their arrival ; he had settled the matter by the annihilation of one of the parties. Doubtless, the Assembly will disapprove his conduct.

On the contrary, the Assëmbly, on Mirabeau's proposal, solemnly returns thanks to Bouillé, and approves his conduct ; rewards are likewise voted to the National Guards who followed him ; to the dead funeral honours in the Field of Mars, and pensions to their families.

On this occasion, Louis XVI. did not testify his usual horror of bloodshed. His eager desire to see order restored caused him to express *for this afflicting, but necessary, affair, his extreme satisfaction*. He thanked Bouillé for his good conduct, and recommended him *to continue*. “ This letter,” says Bouillé, “ shows the goodness and sensibility of his heart.”

“Alas ! ” said the eloquent Loustalot, “ that was not the language of Augustus, when, at the account of the slaughter, he dashed his head against the wall, shouting, ‘ Varus ! restore to me my legions ! ’ ”

The grief of the patriots for this event was very great. Loustalot could not withstand it. This young man, who had but just quitted the bar at Bordeaux, had become in two years the first of journalists, and certainly the most popular (since his *Révolutions de Paris* were sometimes printed to the number of 200,000 copies). He proved that he was also the most sincere of them all,—the one who cherished liberty with the greatest affection, living with her, and dying at her death. This blow appeared to him to postpone for a long time,—for ever,—the hope of his native land. He wrote his last leaf, full of eloquence and sorrow,—a manly sorrow,—that cannot weep, but the more profound on that account—one that it is impossible to survive. A few days after the massacre, he died in his twenty-eighth year.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE JACOBINS.

**Danger of France.**—The affair of Nancy causes the National Guard to be looked upon with suspicion.—New disturbances in the South.—The Counter-revolutionary Confederation of Jalès.—The King consults the Pope ; he protests to the King of Spain, October 6th, 1790.—Unanimity of Europe against the Revolution.—Europe derives a moral power from the interest inspired by Louis XVI.—Necessity for a great association of surveillance.—Origin of the Jacobins, 1789.—Example of a Jacobin Confederation.—What classes contributed to the formation of the Jacobin Clubs.—Had they any precise *creed*?—In what did they modify the old French spirit?—They formed a body of surveillants and accusers, an inquisition against an inquisition.—The Society at Paris is at first a meeting of Deputies, October, 1789.—It prepares the laws and organises a revolutionary police.—The Revolution assumes the offensive, September, 1790.—Necker's flight.—The nobles create terror by their duelling system.—The Jacobins oppose to them the terror of the people.—The mansion of the Duke de Castries sacked, November 13th, 1790.

THE Nancy massacre is a truly fatal period, whence we might date the commencement of those social divisions which, developed with industrialism, at a later period, have become at the present day the real difficulty of France, the secret of her weakness, and the hope of her enemies.

The aristocracy of Europe, and England, their great agent, ought here to thank their good fortune. The Revolution will now be, as it were, with one arm tied, and have but one arm to fight against them all.

This little skirmish at Nancy had the effect of a great moral victory ; for it caused the two powers which the Revolution had just created, its own revolutionary municipalities, and the National Guard, to be suspected of being aristocratic.

People said, repeated, believed, and many still say, that the National Guard had fought for Bouillé. And yet we have seen that, with Lafayette's letters and all the endeavours of his own aid-de-camps, sent expressly from Paris, Bouillé was able to collect, throughout his rather long passage, only seven hundred National Guards, very probably nobles, with

their farmers, gamekeepers, and others. But the true National Guards, the peasant proprietors in the environs of Nancy, consisting themselves of two thousand men, sided with the soldiers, and, in spite of being abandoned by the two French regiments, fired on Bouillé.

Shortly before, at the news that the Austrians had obtained leave to pass through France, thirty thousand National Guards had begun to move.

Strange to relate, it was especially the revolutionary party that accredited this report, that the National Guard had sided with Bouillé. Their animosity against Lafayette and the burgess aristocracy, that was tending to strengthen itself in the National Guard at Paris, caused them to write, print, and propagate what the counter-revolution wanted to make Europe believe.

The conclusion drawn by Europe, was, that this French Revolution must indeed be an execrable thing for the two powers that it had created, the municipalities and the National Guard, to have turned against it.

Lafayette arming Bouillé ! The revolutionary authority unable to restore order, but with the sword of the counter-revolution ! What was more likely to persuade people that the latter had the true power, and was the true social party ? The king, the priests, and the nobles, become confirmed in their convictions of the legitimacy of their cause ; come to an understanding, and act in concert ; after being divided and powerless in the preceding period, they rally their forces in this, and mutually strengthen one another.

The companies, supposed to be extinct, again show themselves boldly : the parliament of Toulouse annuls the proceedings of a municipality against those who trampled upon the tricoloured cockade. The Court of Aids decided in favour of those who refused to be paid in assignats. The collectors would not take them ; and the farmers of the revenue forbade their people to receive them. To reject the money of the Revolution was a very simple means of taking it by famine, of making it bankrupt, and conquering it without fighting.

But the fanatics are determined to fight ; all this appears too slow for them. Those of Montauban pursue and pelt the patrols of a patriot regiment ; and in one of the best departments,

that of Ardèche, the agents of the emigrant party, men like Froment and Antraigues, organise a vast and audacious conspiracy to use the forces of the National Guard against itself, and turn the confederations to the ruin of the spirit that had dictated them. The National Guards of Ardèche, Hérault, and Lozère, are invited to a confederation festival near the Château of Jalès, under pretence of renewing the civic oath. This being done, and the festival ended, the confederative committee, the mayors and the officers of the National Guards, together with the deputies of the army, ascend to the Château of Jalès, and there determine that the committee shall be permanent ; that it shall remain constituted in an authorised and salaried body ; that it shall be the central point of the National Guards, receive petitions from the army, and cause arms to be given to the Catholics of Nîmes, &c. Nor was all this a petty secret conspiracy of aristocracy. It possessed a basis of popular fanaticism. Some of the National Guards wore in their hats the cross of the brotherhoods of the South ; and whole battalions had the cross for their banner. A certain abbé Labastide, the general of these crusaders, having five body-guards for aid-de-camps, pranced about with his white horse, calling upon the peasants to march against Nîmes, and deliver their captive brethren, martyrs of the faith.

The National Assembly, warned and feeling alarmed, issued a decree to dissolve this assembly at Jalès ; but to so little purpose, that it existed even in the spring.

The idea that was spreading and growing stronger in the minds of men, that a great part of the National Guard was favourable to the counter-revolution, would necessarily contribute more than anything else to cause the king to lay aside his irresolution, and take two decisive measures in the month of October. At that period, he had irrevocably made up his mind on the religious question, the one he had the most at heart.

In July, he had consulted the Bishop of Clermont to know whether he could, without endangering his soul, sanction the constitution of the clergy ; and, at the end of August, he had put the same question to the pope. Although the pope gave no ostensible reply, fearing to irritate the Assembly, and cause it to hasten on the annexation of Avignon, it is impossible to doubt

that he imparted to the king, in September, his earnest disapprobation of the acts of the Assembly. On the 6th of October, the king sent the king of Spain, his relation, his protestation against whatever he might be constrained to sign. He then adopted the idea of flight which he had always rejected, not of a pacific flight to Rouen, which Mirabeau had advised, but a warlike flight towards the eastern frontier, to return by force of arms. This plan, which had ever been recommended by Breteuil, the partisan of Austria, and Marie-Antoinette's confidential agent, was again brought forward, in October, by the bishop of Pamiers, who gained the king's assent, obtained full powers from Breteuil to treat with the foreign powers, and was sent back from Paris to concert measures with Bouillé.

These negotiations, begun by the bishop, were continued by M. de Fersen, a Swede, personally and tenderly attached to the queen for many years, who returned from Sweden expressly, and was entirely devoted to her.

Spain, the Emperor of Germany, and Switzerland, gave favourable answers, and promised assistance.

Spain and England, that had seemed ready to go to war, treated on the 27th of October. Austria was not slow in arranging matters with the Turks, and Russia with Sweden. So that, in a few months, Europe found itself united on one side, and the Revolution all alone on the other.

Let us proceed with order and method. It is enough to destroy one revolution a year. That of Brabant this year, that of France next year.

O! noble spectacle! All Europe against Brabant; the world, united, marching to war, and the earth resounding with the tread of armies—to crush a flag! And yet, with all those forces, those brave powers made use, moreover, of the weapons of perfidy. The Austrians, by means of Lamareck, the queen's friend and agent, had divided the Belgians, by duping the *progressists*, giving them the hope of progress, and discovering to them a mine of benevolence in the heart of the philanthropical and kind-hearted Leopold. As soon as ever Leopold was sure of England and Prussia, he treated them with scorn.

This is precisely what would have happened, among us, to our Mirabeaus and Lafayettes, to such as supported the king

through either self-interest or kind-heartedness and compassion. A serious fact, which constituted, perhaps, the greatest danger of that critical state of things, is that royalty, so cruelly oppressive in Europe, so brutally tyrannical towards the weak (lately at Genoa and in Holland, now at Brussels and Liège),—this royal power at the same time inspired interest at Paris, deriving from Louis XVI. and his family an incalculable power of sympathy and pity. Thus, whilst it was using the sword and the dagger, people were weeping over it. The king's captivity, the subject of every conversation in every nation of the world, was there making what is most rare, most powerful, and most terrible in modern times,—a popular legend,—a legend against France. Everybody was speaking of Louis XVI. ; but nobody spoke of poor little Liège, barbarously stifled by the brother-in-law of Louis XVI. Liège, our vanguard of the North, which formerly perished two or three times, in order to save us ; Liège, our Poland on the Meuse, was disdainfully crushed by those colossal powers of the North, without anybody paying the slightest attention. But of what is the heart of man composed, if it can entertain such unjust caprices in its compassion ?

On what side soever I turn my eyes, I behold an immense formidable snare, stretching everywhere, at home and abroad. If the Revolution do not find an energetically-concentrated power of association, if it do not become contracted by some violent effort of its own, I think we must perish. It is not the innocent confederations, which confounded indistinctly friends with enemies, in the blind transport of brotherly affection, that can save us from such a difficult position ; nor can we expect such a miracle.

It requires far stronger associations ; it requires the Jacobins, a vast and powerful organisation of a restless watch kept over the public authorities, their agents, the priests, and the nobles. The Jacobins are not the Revolution, but the eye of the Revolution,—the eye to watch, the voice to accuse, and the arm to strike.

They were spontaneous and natural associations, for which we should do wrong to seek any mysterious origin, or any hidden dogmas. They sprang up from the very position of things,—from the most imperative necessity, that of safety.



They were a public and evident conspiracy against the partly-visible and partly-concealed conspiracy of the aristocracy.

It would be committing a great injustice against that great association to place its entire origin in the society of Paris, or to confine all its history to the same. The latter, composed, more than any other, of impure elements, especially of Orleanism, and being moreover audacious and but little scrupulous in the choice of means, has often impelled its sister societies, those of the provinces, which were obediently following it, into machiavelian measures.

The name of *mother-society*, too often employed, would lead people to suppose that all the others were colonies sent from the Rue Saint-Honoré. The central society was *mother* to all those sister associations, but it was by adoption.

The latter spring up of their own accord. They are all, or almost all, elubs suddenly formed in some public danger or strong emotion. Then, crowds of men assemble. A few persist, and, even when the crisis is past, continue to assemble, and communicate to one another their fears and suspicions; they are restless, make inquiries, and write to the neighbouring towns, or to Paris: such men are Jacobins.

The state of public affairs, however, is not everything in the formation of these societies: their origin proceeds also from a speciality of character. The Jacobin is an original and particular species. Many men are born Jacobins.

In the general enthusiastic transport of France, in moments of easy and credulous sympathy, when the people, without distrust, cast themselves into the arms of their enemies, this class of men, either keener-sighted or less sympathetic, remain reserved and distrustful. In the confederations they are to be seen, appearing at the *fêtes*, without mingling with the crowd, forming rather a body apart, a battalion of surveillance, which, even amid the general enthusiasm, attests the perils of the situation.

A few of them composed their confederation apart, among themselves, and with closed doors. Let us quote an example.

I see in an unpublished act of Rouen, that, on the 14th of July, 1790, three Friends of the Constitution (the name then assumed by the Jacobins) met together at the house of a widow lady, a rich and considerable person of the town; and in her



hands they take the civic oath. We imagine we behold Cato and Marcia in Lucan : “*Junguntur taciti contentique auspice Bruto.*” They proudly sent the act of their confederation to the National Assembly, which received at the same time that of the great confederation of Rouen, in which appeared the deputies of sixty towns and half a million of men.

These three Jacobins are a priest,—the chaplain of the prison,—and two surgeons. One of them brought his brother, the king’s printer at Rouen. Add, moreover, two children,—the lady’s nephew and niece,—and two women, perhaps belonging to her household or dependent on her custom. All eight received the oath from the hands of this Cornelia, who afterwards took the oath alone.

This society, though so small, seems to have been complete. The lady, a widow of a merchant or shipowner, represents the great commercial fortunes ; the printer is industry ; and the surgeons are capacity, talents, and experience. The priest is the Revolution itself ; but he will not long remain priest: he it is who writes the act, copies it, and notifies it to the National Assembly. He is the agent of the affair, just as the lady is its centre. By him, this society is complete ; although we do not perceive in it the personage who is the mainspring of every similar society,—the lawyer, the attorney. This priest of the Criminal Court and the prison, this chaplain of prisoners, and confessor of culprits, but yesterday dependent on the Parliament, to-day a Jacobin, and declaring himself as such to the National Assembly, is, for boldness and activity, equal to three lawyers.

We need not be astonished to find a lady the centre of this little society. Many women entered those associations,—women of very serious minds,—with all the fervour of the female heart, a blind enthusiasm composed of affections and ideas, the spirit of proselytism, and all the passions of the middle ages devoted to the service of new faith. The person of whom we are speaking had been subjected to severe trials ; she was a Jewess who had seen all her family converted, and still remained an Israelite. Having lost first her husband, and afterwards her child (by a dreadful accident). she seemed to adopt the Revolution as the object of her future affection ; and being rich and alone, she must have been easily led by her friends, I

suppose, to give pledges to the new system, to embark her fortune in it by the acquisition of national property.

Why does this little society make its confederation apart ? Because Rouen in general seems to it to be too aristocratical ; because the great confederation of the sixty towns that assemble there, with its leaders, d'Estouteville, d'Herbouville, de Sévrac, and others,—that confederation composed partly of nobility, does not appear to it sufficiently pure ; and, lastly, because it was formed on the 6th of July, and not on the 14th,—the day consecrated to the taking of the Bastille. Therefore, on the 14th, the latter, proudly isolated at home, far from the profane and lukewarm, solemnise that sacred day. They are unwilling to be confounded with others ; they are, in different relations, a select body, as were most of these primitive Jacobins,—a sort of aristocracy, either of money or of talent and energy, in natural opposition to the aristocracy of birth.

There were but few of the people at that period in the Jacobin societies ; and no poor.\* In the towns, however, where there happened to be a rivalry of two clubs, where the aristocratic club (as was sometimes the case) usurped the title of Friends of the Constitution, the other club of the same name did not fail, for the purpose of strengthening itself, to grant admission more easily, and to receive, among its members, petty tradespeople and shopkeepers. At Lyons, and doubtless in a few manufacturing towns, the workmen took a part very early in the discussions of the clubs.

But the true essence of the Jacobin clubs was neither the latter nor the former, but a distinguished though secondary class, which had been for a long time waging a secret warfare against those of the upper ranks : the advocate, for instance, against the magistrate, who abased him with his haughtiness ; the attorney and the surgeon, wishing to rise to a level with the advocate and the physician ; and the priest against the bishop. The surgeon, in this country, had, by dint of merit, broken down the barrier, and ascended almost to an equality. The Châtelet kept up a continual warfare against the Parliament,

\* Precisely for this reason, that several of these societies purposed to aid the poor, and laid their members under contribution for this purpose. They divided their members into stewards, introducers, reporters, readers, observers, consolers, &c.

which it defeated in 1789, and was for a moment (who could have expected it?) the great national tribunal. Andrien Duport, the celebrated founder of the Jacobins of Paris, was a member of the Châtelet, who rose to be one of the Parliament, but, at the Revolution, reappeared as a friend of the Châtelet, and annihilated the parliament party.

All this mixture tended to make the Jacobins a class of men severe, distrustful, fervent, reserved, and more positive and able than could have been expected from their unprecise theories.

Although long-standing subjects of jealousy and new views of ambition may have served them as a powerful motive, and the intrigues of different parties may have made use of these societies, their character in general very strongly expressed in the instance that we have quoted, is, in its origin, that of natural and spontaneous associations, formed by a real, patriotic religion, an austere devotion to liberty, and a civic purity, extremely exacting, and ever tending to the expulsion of the unworthy.

What was the symbol of those petty churches? Had that fervent faith any precise creed? No, one very vague as yet, uniting, without being aware of it, very contrary principles. Although they were all, or almost all, royalists, at that period, they were very bitter against the king. The minds of all were swayed by Rousseau, by the famous principle of the philosophy of the age—Return to Nature. And yet, for all that, many believed themselves to be Christians, and attached themselves, at least in name, to the ancient belief which condemns nature, and believes it to be spoiled and fallen.

This very contradiction, this ignorance, this faith in the new principle, as yet but little investigated, is worthy of respect; it is the faith in the unknown God. And this faith is not less active within them; it raises and strengthens their souls. Like their master, Rousseau, they raise their eyes and direct their emulation towards the noble models of antiquity,—the heroes of Plutarch. If they do not penetrate very deeply into the genius of antiquity, they perceive at least its moral austerity, its stoic fortitude, and thence derive the inspiration of civil devotion; they learn from it what it best knew, and what they themselves will need to know, how to embrace Death!

Another serious consideration is, that they derived thence a profound modification of the spirit of ancient France.

This spirit depended on two things, almost impossible to conciliate with the Revolution and the violent struggle it had then to support. On one hand, a certain facility of confidence and belief, a too great deference for others, a certain gift of politeness and gentleness,—charming, but fatal, qualities, which have so often given others an advantage over us. The other character of the old French spirit proceeded from what is termed honour, to a certain delicacy of proceeding, also to certain prejudices,—to the facility, for instance, with which it was admitted that a man, for having insulted you, had a right to cut your throat,—an opinion which, in theory, proceeds from the esteem of courage, but which, in practice, often places the brave at the mercy of the skilful.

These two traits in the character of ancient France were despised by the Jacobins.

Being the adversaries of priests, and obliged to contend against a vast association, of which confession and delation are the primary means, the Jacobins employed analogous ones, and declared themselves boldly the partisans of delation, which they proclaimed to be the first of the duties of a citizen. They professed and practised mutual surveillance, public censure, and even secret delation, grounding their conduct in this matter upon the most illustrious examples of antiquity. The city of antiquity, both Greek and Roman, and the petty monastic city of the middle ages, called convent or abbey, have for their principle the duty of improving and even purifying itself, by the surveillance which all the members of the association exercise over one another. And such is also the principle which the Jacobins apply to the whole of society.

Having sprung into existence in a great national danger, amid an immense conspiracy, which the conspirators denied, (and of which they have since boasted,) the Jacobins formed, for the safety of France, a legion, a whole nation of public accusers.

But, widely different from the inquisition of the middle ages, which, by the confessional and a thousand other means, dived into the secret recesses of the heart, the revolutionary inquisition had but exterior means and testimony, frequently

uncertain, at its disposal. Hence an excessive unhealthy distrust, and a spirit of suspicion, the more keen, as it was less sure of being able to reach the truth. Everything gave rise to alarm and uneasiness, and everything seemed suspicious.

This fear was but too natural in the peril in which they beheld France, the Revolution, and the cause of liberty and mankind! That happy Revolution, expected for a thousand years, had at length arrived, but was about to perish on the morrow,—suddenly snatched away from those who had embraced it and treasured it up in their hearts as the best part of their being. It was no longer an outward possession of which they were threatened to be deprived, but their very life!... Nobody could have survived it. In order to do justice to the Jacobins, we must mentally place ourselves in their time and situation, and understand the necessity in which they then were.

They were in face of an immense association, half idiots, half knaves, which was, and is still, called the world of *respectable* people (*honnêtes gens*).

On one hand, two informers: the king, who presently denounces his people to Europe; and the priest who denounces the people to the simple, to women, and to La Vendée.

On the other hand, the silly alliance of Lafayette with Bouillé, for the advantage of the latter, which (though done with a good intention) would place the Revolution in the hands of its enemies.

Who is able to tell, with every particular, what was, in each town, rural district, and village, the association of that world of *respectable* people?

There was the world of priests, the world of women, the world of nobles, and the would-be-nobles.

Women! What a power is here! With such auxiliaries, what need is there of the press? Their tongue is a far more efficacious medium: a true power, and the more powerful, as it is by no means rude, but yielding, elastic, and bending to return ever more potent. Whisper one word in their ear. It flies, circulates, and acts, morning, noon, and night, by the fireside, at market, in bed, and in the evening conversation, before the door, everywhere, on man, woman, and child, on all! A man must be three times man to withstand it!

This was indeed a real and terrible obstacle for the Revolu-



tion. In comparison with this, what are the foreign powers and all the armies of Europe? . . . Let us pity our fathers.

Now, who would enter into the vexatious detail of the world of nobles and would-be-nobles, the ancient corruption of the parliament party, their old-fashioned system of police, the most positive obstacle that Lafayette, according to his own confession, met with in Paris; or the base and servile clients, tradespeople, men of small incomes, and the crowd of petty creditors dependent on the clergy and the nobles?

And then, these same nobles found themselves, by the favour of Lafayette and the revolutionary laws, the commanders and officers of their clients in the National Guard.

To withstand all this, the new association needed to be very strongly organised. This organisation was found in the society of Paris. The primitive originality of the latter was less in the theories than in the practical genius of its founders.

The principal was Duport, and he remained for a long time the very head of the Jacobins. "What Duport has planned," said the people, "Barnave says, and Lameth performs." Mirabeau used to call them the *Triumqueusat*.\* From the violence of their attack on the kingly power, they were believed to be republicans; and people attributed to them a profound design,—a premeditated plan to effect a radical change. For their part, they felt flattered with this bad reputation, which they did not deserve. They were only inconsistent; and, at the critical moment, they were found to be partisans of the monarchy that they had destroyed.

And yet Duport was a thinker, endowed with a stronger and more complete mind than those of his colleagues; and being a man of speculation, he possessed at the same time much revolutionary experience, even before the Revolution. As the rival of d'Esprémesnil in the parliament, he had been one of the principal promoters of the opposition against Calonne and Brienne; and must have been thoroughly acquainted with the secret action of the parliamentary police, and the manner of organising the riots of the bazoche and the people in favour of the parliament.

During the elections of 1789, he began to assemble several

\* A variation of *Triumvirate*, meaning the three scoundrels.—C. C.



politicians at his house (Rue du Grand-Chantier, near the Temple). Mirabeau and Sièyes went there, but would not return a second time. It is "the politics of the low intrigue" to act only by the power of ideas ; but Duport, to the assistance of ideas, wanted also to add underhand manœuvring, popular agitation, and riots, if necessary.

A new meeting was formed at Versailles, composed fundamentally of the deputies from Brittany, and called the Breton club. There were prepared, under the influence of Duport, Chapelier, and others, several of the bold measures which saved the Revolution at its birth. The minority of the nobility, half composed of great philanthropic lords and discontented courtiers, joined this Breton club, and introduced a very different and a very equivocal spirit. Of the revolutionary courtiers, the most audacious and intriguing were the brothers Lameth, young colonels, of a family dissatisfied though much favoured by the Court. They were nobles of Artois, and had been elected in Franche-Comté ; and it was a deputy from this last-mentioned province, very probably their agent, who, in October, 1789, when the Assembly was at Paris, hired of the Jacobin friars a room for the purpose of assembling the deputies. The monks let their refectory for two hundred francs, and, for two hundred more, the furniture, chairs, and tables. Later, the room not being sufficient, the club hired the library also, and lastly the church. The tombs of the ancient monks, the buried school of St. Thomas, and the fellow-friars of Jacques Clement, thus became the mute witnesses and the confidants of revolutionary intrigues.

Besides the members of the Breton club, many deputies who had never been in Paris, who did not feel very safe after the scenes of October, and imagined themselves lost amidst that tumultuous populace, had taken lodgings in the Rue Saint-Honoré, near one another, in order to be able to assemble together in case of need. There they were, at the door of the Assembly, which then sat in the riding-school (*Manège*) at the spot where the Rue de Rivoli crosses the Rue de Castiglione ; and thus it was convenient for them to meet, almost opposite, at the convent of the Jacobins.

There were a hundred deputies on the first day, then two hundred, and afterwards four hundred ; and they assumed the

title of Friends of the Constitution ; which constitution, in reality, they founded. It was prepared by them, for these four hundred members, more united among themselves, better disciplined, and more exact also than the other deputies, were masters of the Assembly. There they brought, ready made, both the laws and the elections, and they alone appointed the presidents, secretaries, and others ; but for some time they disguised their omnipotency by choosing the president occasionally from other ranks than their own.

In the winter of 1789, all France was in Paris. Many considerable personages wanted to obtain admission to the Jacobin club. They admitted at first a few distinguished writers ; the first was Condorcet ; afterwards other persons who were known, and who were to be presented and recommended by six members. Nobody was admitted without a card, which was carefully examined at the door by two members placed there for that purpose.

The Jacobin club could not long confine itself to being merely a place for making laws,—a laboratory for preparing them. It soon became a vast committee of revolutionary police.

The state of affairs would have it so. What, indeed, was the use of making a constitution, if the Court, by some skilful manœuvre, overthrew all their work prepared with so much trouble ? We have seen that, at the report of the conspiracy at Brest, which, so it was said, was about to be delivered up to the English, Duport had caused the committee of inquiry to be created by the Assembly (July 27th, 1789). This committee had no other agents than those of the government it had to watch. These agents, which it needed, were found among the Jacobins. Lafayette, who became acquainted, to his cost, with their organisation, says that its nucleus was a meeting of ten men, called by themselves the *Sabbat*, who received every day their orders from the Lameths ; each of the ten forwarded them to ten others, heads of battalions and different sections, so that all the sections received the same denunciation against the authorities, and the same proposition of riot, &c., at the very same time.

Lafayette had on his side the committee of inquiry of the town, and many persons devoted to him in the National Guard.

These two bodies of police thwarted each other and that of the Court. The police of the Jacobins, acting in the same direction as the popular movement, and going with the stream, progressed with as much facility as the others met with difficulty. It extended everywhere, was organised in every town in opposition to the municipalities, and brought against every civil and military body a society of surveillance and denunciation.

We have spoken of the *club of '89* which Lafayette and Sièyes attempted at first to oppose to that of the Jacobins. That conciliatory club, which expected to unite the monarchy with the Revolution, would have ended, if it had succeeded, only in the destruction of the Revolution. At the present day, when so many things then secret are known to the world, we can boldly state that, without the strongest and most energetic influence, the Revolution would have perished: if it had not turned aggressive, it was lost. The imprudent association of Lafayette with Bouillé had inflicted upon it the most serious blow; and it was through the Jacobins that it resumed the offensive.

On the 2nd of September, Paris learned the news of the massacre at Nancy, and a few hours later, on the same day, forty thousand men were crowding the Tuileries, besieging the Assembly, and shouting, "Dismiss the Ministers! The heads of the ministers! Hang the ministers! *Les ministres à la lanterne!*"

The effect of the news was deadened, emotion being overawed by emotion, and terror by terror.

The singular rapidity with which this insurrection was arranged proves at once the inflammable state in which the people then were, and the vigorous organisation of the Jacobin society, which was able, at the very moment it gave the signal, to realise the performance.

And M. de Lafayette, with his thirty-odd thousand men of the National Guard, and his military and municipal police, together with the resources of the Hôtel-de-Ville and those of the Court, united to him for a moment in order to *strike the blow* at Nancy,—Lafayette, I say, with so many resources, had not the power to prevent this insurrection.

The minister against whom the people were first directed, was Necker, the minister of finance, who at that moment acted

the least. All he did, was to write : he had just published a memorial against the assignats. A few crowds were sent to shout and threaten him. Lafayette, who could strike such blows at Nancy, durst not strike any at Paris, and advised Necker to provide for his own safety. On the motion of a Jacobin deputy, the Assembly decreed that it would itself direct the public Treasury : a serious decision, one of the most violent blows that could be given to the kingly power.

Here we have two parties, the Jacobin and the Constitutional, both employing force, violence, and terror. Lafayette strikes by Bouillé, and the Jacobins by revolt : a reign of Terror at Nancy, and a reign of Terror at Paris.

How many ages have passed since the confederation of July ? . . . Who would believe it ? Only two months. Whither has fled that gentle ray of peace ? The bright sun of July is suddenly eclipsed ; and we are entering upon a gloomy time of plots and violence. As early as September, all grows dark. Even the press, so fervent and anxious, is, we perceive, groping its way in obscurity. It can no longer see, but haunts about, and guesses. The inquisition of the Jacobins now beginning, gives but a faint, uncertain, flickering glimmer, like those famous lights in the nave of the church where they are now assembled, at the convent in the Rue Saint-Honoré.

Only one thing was clear amid this general obscurity, which was the insolence of the nobles. They had everywhere assumed the attitude of defiance and provocation ; and, on all sides, were insulting the patriots, the most peaceful people,—the National Guard. Occasionally the people would interfere, and then very sanguinary scenes were the result. To quote only one instance : at Cahors, two brothers, who were nobles, amused themselves with insulting one of the National Guard who had sung *Ça ira*. The people wanted to have them arrested ; but they killed or wounded whoever went near them, and then retreated to their house, where, being supported, and having several loaded guns, they fired upon the crowd, and killed a great many men. To put an end to this slaughter, the people burnt down the house.

Even in the Assembly, in the sanctuary of the laws, nothing was heard but the insults and challenges of the nobles. M. d'Ambly threatened Mirabeau with his cane ; and another went

so far as to say: "Why do we not fall upon those rascals sword in hand?"

A person, dispatched by their party, followed Charles de Lameth for two whole days in order to force him to fight. Lameth, who was very brave and skilful, obstinately refused to honour him with a duel. On the third day, as nothing could tire his patience, all the right side of the Assembly rose *en masse* and accused him of cowardice. The young Duke de Castries then insulted him; they went out; and Lameth was wounded. This was enough to enrage the people. A report was spread that the duke's sword had been poisoned, and that Lameth would die in consequence. The Jacobins thought this was a good opportunity to frighten the duellists. Their agents directed the crowd to the mansion of the Duke de Castries; there was no murder nor robbery committed; but the furniture was all broken to pieces and thrown into the street. All this was done quietly and methodically; a sentinel being placed by the mob at the king's portrait, the only one that was respected. Lafayette arrived, and looked on, but could do nothing: most of the National Guards were themselves angry about Lameth's wound, and thought that after all the mob had not done wrong (November 13th, 1790).

From that day, the terror inspired by the duellists, which was gradually restoring an ascendancy to the nobility, gave way to another kind of terror,—the vengeance of the people. The individual superiority that the nobles possessed by their skill in fencing disappeared in presence of the crowd. They had attempted to make every party question a question of honour; and had made an abuse of their skill; but now they were opposed by numbers. The bravest of the revolutionary party, those who have since displayed their courage on every battle-field, refused to give to bullies the advantage of an individual warfare.

## CHAPTER VI.

## STRUGGLE OF PRINCIPLES IN THE ASSEMBLY AND AT THE JACOBINS'.

Paris towards the end of 1790.—Social circle, the Iron Mouth.—The Club of '89.—The Jacobin Club.—Robespierre at the Jacobins'.—Robespierre's origin ; he is an orphan at ten years of age ; receives a presentation from the Clergy.—His literary attempts.—Criminal Judge at Arras ; his resignation.—He pleads against the Bishop.—Robespierre at the States-General.—On the 5th of October, he supports Maillard.—A conspiracy to render him ridiculous.—His solitude and poverty.—He breaks off his friendship with the two Lameths.—The uncertain or retrograde tendency of the Assembly.—It had reduced the number of active citizens.—The duplicity of the Lameths and Jacobins of that time.—They intrust their Newspaper to one of the Orleans Party (November).—Robespierre's probity.—His politics.—In 1790, he leans for support on the only great Associations then existing in France,—the Jacobins and the Priests.

TOWARDS the end of 1790, there was for a moment an apparent halt,—little or nothing stirring : nothing but a great number of vehicles crowding at the barriers, and the roads thronged with emigrants. By way of compensation, a great number of foreigners came to behold the vast spectacle, and to watch Paris.

It was an uneasy restless repose. People are astonished and almost frightened at having no new events. The fervent Camille Desmoulins is in despair at having nothing to relate ; between the acts, he gets married, and notifies that event to the world.

No movement in open warfare (as people then felt they were) was something very unnatural. In reality, there were two immense events.

First, the king was denouncing France to the kings of Europe.

Secondly, in opposition to the ecclesiastical-aristocratical conspiracy, that of the Jacobins was being strongly organised.

The prominent feature of the period is the vast increase of



clubs, the immense fermentation of Paris especially, to such a degree, that meetings are suddenly formed at every corner of the street. Paris, so brilliant and monotonous in times of peace, can scarcely give us any idea of the Paris of that day. Let us return for a moment to that agitated, noisy, violent, dirty, dismal, but living Paris, then overflowing with passions.

Out of respect to the first theatre of the Revolution, we must pay our first visit to the Palais-Royal. I will lead you to it straight, passing through that agitated crowd, those noisy groups, and shoals of women devoted to the liberties of nature. I pass through the narrow wooden galleries, thronged to suffocation, and by descending the fifteen steps of that dark passage, I place you in the middle of the Circus.

Somebody is preaching ! Who would have expected it, in such a place, or in such a worldly assemblage, amidst pretty women of an equivocal appearance ? At the first glance, one would think it was a sermon among girls. But no, the assembly is of a graver character ; I perceive a number of men of letters, and academicians, and M. de Condorcet, at the foot of the tribunc.

But is that orator really a priest ? Yes, in dress ; he is a handsome man, about forty years of age ; his language is fervent, though sometimes harsh and violent ; his manner, totally devoid of unction, is bold, and somewhat chimerical ; but whether he be a preacher, a poet, or a prophet, it little matters : he is abbé Fauchet. This Saint Paul is preaching between two Theclas, one of whom never quits him, but whether wanted or not, follows him to the club and to the altar, so great is her adoration ; the other, a Dutch lady, endowed with a good heart and a noble mind, is Madame Palm Aelder, the orator of women, who preaches their emancipation. And actively are they working for it. Mademoiselle Kéralio is publishing a newspaper ; and presently Madame Roland will be a minister, or even more.

I am but little surprised that this prophet, thus surrounded by women, should speak so eloquently of love ; for love occurs every moment in his ardent language. Luckily, I understand : it is love for mankind. What does he mean ? He seems to be expounding some unknown mystery, which he is confiding to three thousand persons. He speaks in the name of Nature.

and, nevertheless, believes himself a Christian ; and, under a whimsical masonic form, he unites Bacon with Jesus. At one time, he outsteps the Revolution ; at another, he is retrograde : one day, he preaches Lafayette ; and on the morrow goes further than the democrats, and founds human society on the duty of “ *giving a sufficient livelihood to each of its members.*” Several persons imagine they perceive the agrarian law at the bottom of his obscure doctrine.

His journal, that of the “ *Social circle, for the confederation of the friends of truth,*” is called the Iron Mouth, (*Bouche de fer,*) a threatening and frightful title. This ever-open mouth (in the Rue Richelieu) receives, both day and night, all the anonymous information and accusations that are thrown into it. They enter ; but be not alarmed : for the most part, they remain there : this Iron Mouth does not bite.\*

Let us withdraw. In the crisis in which we now are, it is necessary to watch and provide. Here there are many theories, too many ladies, and too many fanciful dreams. This atmosphere is not wholesome for us. Love and peace are certainly two excellent things ; but war has now begun. Is it possible to conciliate men and opposite principles before they are reconciled? . . . Moreover, to increase my distrust, I perceive above the Circus the suspected *Club of '89*, in those brilliant apartments, blazing with light, on the first floor of the Palais-Royal,—the club of Lafayette, Bailly, Mirabeau, Sièyes, and others who would halt before they possess any securities. From time to time, those idols of the people appear on the balcony, and bow to the crowd in a royal manner. The mainspring of this opulent club is a good *restaurateur*.

I prefer to follow, by the yellow glare of the lamps glimmering through the fog in the Rue Saint-Honorè, the dark dense multitude all wending in the same direction to that small door of the convent of the Jacobins. It is there that the agents of the insurrection come every morning to receive orders from the Lameths, or from Laclos the money of the Duke of Orleans. At this hour the club is open. Let us enter cautiously, for the place is badly lighted. And yet

\* This newspaper, amid its nonsensical false mysticism and free-masonry, contains many eloquent and singular ideas. It would, perhaps, deserve to be reprinted, as an historical curiosity.

the meeting is numerous, and truly serious and imposing. Here public opinion resounds from all parts of France ; and here, from every Department, news pours in, true or false, and accusations, whether just or not. Hence also are dispatched the replies. This is the great East, the centre of the societies ; and this the great freemasonry, and not yonder with that innocent Fauchet, who has nothing of it except the idle form.

Yes, this dark church is but the more solemn. Behold, if you can see, the vast number of deputies ; they have been as many as four hundred ; those that you now behold, about two hundred in number, are still the principal leaders ; here are Dupont and Lameth ; and yonder the erect, presumptuous, the provoking countenance of the young and brilliant lawyer Barnave. To make amends for absent deputies, the society has admitted nearly a thousand members, all active and distinguished persons.

Here, we behold nobody of the lower class. Workmen come, but at different hours, and in another room, below, where a fraternal society has been formed, in which the constitution is expounded to them. A society of women of the lower class likewise begins to assemble in the room below.\*

The Jacobins are a meeting of distinguished and educated men. Here, French literature has a majority : Laharpe, Chénier, Chamfort, Andrieux, Sedaine, and so many others ; and artists are also numerous,—David, Vernet, Larive, and (the representative of the Revolution in the theatre) the young Roman Talma. At the door, to examine the cards, are two censors, Laïs, the singer, and a handsome youth, the promising pupil of Madame de Genlis,—the son of the Duke of Orleans.

That dark man at the bureau, who is smiling grimly, is the very agent of the prince, the too notorious author of the *Liaisons Dangereuses*, Laclos ; and, as a remarkable contrast, M. de Robespierre is speaking in the tribune.

This is an honest man, who adheres to principles : a man of talent and austere morality. His weak and rather shrill voice, his sad and meagre visage, and his everlasting olive-green coat (his only coat, thread-bare and scrupulously clean), altogether

\* Marat contrasts the energy of these women with the prattling of the Jacobin aristocracy, in his Number of December 30th, 1790.

bear witness that his principles do not enrich their votary. Though seldom listened to at the National Assembly, he excels and will ever excel at the Jacobins. He is the society itself,—nothing more or less, expressing it perfectly, moving with it at the same pace, without ever outstepping it. We will follow him very closely and attentively, noting and dating every degree in his prudent career, and noting likewise on his pale countenance the deep traces that will be made by the Revolution, the untimely wrinkles of vigils, and the furrows of meditation. It is necessary to relate his history before we describe him. The artificial product of fortune and labour, he was but little indebted to nature ; and we should not comprehend him if we were not thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances which produced him, and the strong will that made him what he was. Few men were ever more unfortunate. First, he suffered repeated disasters in his family and in his fortune ; next, he was adopted and protected by the upper clergy,—a world of great lords, hostile to the ideas, and averse to that spirit of the age which the young man shared. Then, he emerged from his earlier misfortune only to fall back into one still greater,—the necessity of proving ungrateful.

as him

The Robespierres had been, from father to son, notaries at Carvin, near Lille. The most ancient document that I have found relating to them is one of the year 1600.\* They are supposed to have come over from Ireland. Their ancestors, perhaps, formed, in the sixteenth century, a part of those numerous Irish colonies which came over to people the monasteries and seminaries on the coast, where they received from the Jesuits a sound education of wranglers and cavillers. These seminaries have educated, among others, Burke and O'Connell.

In the eighteenth century, the Robespierres sought for a wide field. One branch of the family remained near Carvin ; but the other settled at Arras, a great ecclesiastical, political, and juridical centre, a city of provincial states and upper tribunals, abounding with business and law-suits. In no place did the nobility and the clergy hold their sway more despotically. There were especially two princes or rather two kings of Arras,

\* M. Gentil's collection, at Lille.

the bishop, and the powerful abbé de Saint-Waast, to whom about one-third of the city belonged. The bishop had preserved the seignorial right of appointing judges to the criminal tribunal. Even at the present day, his immense palace buries the half of Arras in its shadow. Damp and dismal streets, with expressive names, Rue du Conseil, Rue des Rapporteurs, &c., reminding one of a chancery life, wind about the walls of this palace. It was in the last-mentioned street, the most dismal and solitary of all, in a very decent respectable-looking house, that an industrious honest lawyer of the council of Artois lived, worked, and wrote night and day, and who became father to Robespierre in the year 1758.\*

He was rich only in esteem and domestic felicity ; but having had the misfortune to lose his wife, the hopes of his life were shattered. He fell into an inconsolable despondency, became incapable of managing his business, and ceased to plead. Being advised to travel, he departed ; but no news was ever received from him ; nor does anybody know what became of him.

Four children remained forsaken in that large deserted house. Maximilien, the eldest, found himself, in his tenth or eleventh year, the head of the family,—the guardian, as it were, of his brother and two sisters. His character immediately changed ; and he became, what he ever remained, wonderfully serious ; his countenance could relax, and a kind of feigned smile even became later its habitual expression, but his heart remained sad for ever. Though so young, he found himself at once a father, a master, a director for the little family, with which he would reason and discourse.

This premature little man was the best pupil at the college of Arras ; and the abbé de Saint-Waast was easily induced to confer upon so excellent a scholar one of the presentations in his gift for the college of Louis-le-Grand. He arrived, therefore, all alone at Paris, separated from his brother and sisters, and without any other recommendation than one to a canon of Nôtre-Dame, to whom he became much attached. But his ill-fortune followed him ; the canon died shortly after ; and he

\* And not in 1759. M. Degeorge has had the goodness to forward to me, from Arras, the certificate of Robespierre's birth, lately discovered.



learned at the same time the death of one of his sisters, the youngest and most fondly loved.

Within those high and dismal walls of Louis-le-Grand, blackened by the shadow of the Jesuits, and in those deep courts where the sun so seldom appears, the orphan would walk alone, little sympathising with the happy and noisy youths about him. The others who had parents, and, in the holidays, enjoyed the intercourse of domestic affection and the world, felt less the stern impression of this sad education, which blights the bloom of the heart and destroys it with its pestilential breath. But it left a deep impression on the soul of Robespierre.

Being an orphan and a friendless scholar, he was obliged to protect himself by his own merit, efforts, and exemplary conduct. Much more is expected from an exhibitor than from any other pupil. He is bound to succeed. The good places and the prizes which are a reward for others, are a tribute for the poor scholar, a payment he must make to his protectors.

This position was humiliating, sad, and cruel; yet it does not appear to have much altered the character of Camille Desmoulins, who was also an exhibitor of the clergy. The latter was younger, but Danton was of about the same age as Robespierre, and studied in the same classes.

Seven or eight years were passed in this manner. Next came the study of the law, as usual, and the business of attorney. Robespierre, though naturally a logician, an arguer, and fond of abstract reasoning, succeeded very indifferently; he could not accustom himself to the sophistry of the bar and to the subtleties of chancery. Imbued with the ideas of Rousseau, Mably, and the philosophers of the age, he could not well manage to descend from the region of generalities. He was obliged to return to Arras, and pass a provincial existence. As a *Lauréat* of Louis-le-Grand, he was well received, and gained some success in the world and in academic literature. The academy of the *Rosati*, which bestowed roses as the prize of poetry, also admitted Robespierre. He could make rhymes as well as another. He competed for the eulogy on Gresset, and gained the second prize; next, for a more serious subject: "The reversibility of crime, and the disgrace incurred by the relatives of the criminal." But all this is mere pastoral sentimentality, very weakly written; by which, however, the youthful



author made a more tender impression upon a young lady of that place.\* This young lady had sworn she would espouse no other; but, on returning from a journey, he found her married.

The clergy, naturally proud of such a *protégé*, remained very favourably disposed towards him. He had obtained from the abbé of Saint-Waast the favour that he would give his young brother the presentation he had held at the college of Louis-le-Grand; and he was also named by the bishop member of the criminal court; but having been obliged to condemn an assassin to death, his sister assures us that he was so painfully affected by it, that he sent in his resignation.

However this may be, he acted wisely, on the eve of the Revolution, to abandon the odious profession of judge of the ancient system, appointed by priests. He turned advocate. It was certainly better to reconcile his opinions and his life, live on little or nothing, and wait. Though very poor, it is said that, with a praiseworthy scruple, he would not plead every kind of cause, but made a selection. But great was his embarrassment when some of the peasantry came to intreat him to plead for them against the Bishop of Arras. He examined their case, and found it just: at that period no other advocate probably would have dared to support it against that sovereign of the town. Robespierre, who considered an advocate as a magistrate, cast sentiment, propriety, and gratitude at the feet of justice, and pleaded against his protector.

No country was better calculated than Artois to form fervent partisans of liberty; for none suffered more from clerical and feudal tyranny. The whole of the land belonged to nobles and ecclesiastic noblemen. That mockery of states which the province possessed, seemed a systematic outrage against justice and reason, the Third-Estate being represented therein by some twenty mayors nominated by the lords of the manor. They, the Latour-Maubourgs, the d'Estourmels, the Lameths, and others, held the administration fast in their own hands like an hereditary possession: an admirable and rare administration in its progress towards absurdity, as one of the Lameths himself

\* I think she must be the person alluded to in the motto on Robespierre's first portrait (in M. Saint-Albin's collection): he looks very young, effeminate, and void of expression, with a rose in one hand, and the other on his heart, with these words underneath—" *Tout pour mon amie.*"

confesses. First, every possessor of a fief had votes ; next, it was required that a voter must have an estate with a tower (*terre à clocher*), and four degrees of nobility ; later, they were obliged to prove seven degrees : and, on the eve of the Revolution, the administration would not be satisfied with less than ten degrees of nobility. We cannot be surprised if this eminently retrograde province deputed to the States-General a rigid partisan of the new ideas, if this man ignorant of petty prevarication, and acquainted with only the straight road of justice, brought to the Revolution a kind of geometrical spirit,—the square, the compass, and the level.

Although he had left Arras behind him, he still found Arras on the benches of the Assembly,—I mean the lasting hatred of the prelates towards their protégé, their deserter, and the contempt of the lords of Artois, for an advocate, brought up by charity, and now sitting by their side. This well-known malevolence could not fail to add to the timidity of the new member, which was extreme. He confessed to Etienne Dumont that when he ascended the tribune he trembled like a leaf. Nevertheless, he was successful. When, in the month of May, 1789, the clergy came in a perfidious manner to intreat the Third-Estate to have compassion on the poor people and to begin their labours, Robespierre made a vehement bitter reply, and, feeling himself supported by the approbation of the Assembly, he obeyed the impulse of his passion, and was eloquent.

Having been absent on the night of the 4th of October, and sorry at having missed so fine an opportunity, he eagerly seized the perilous circumstance of the 5th of October. When Maillard, the orator of the women, came to harangue the Assembly, all the deputies were hostile or mute ; but Robespierre arose, and twice supported Maillard.

This serious step decided his destiny, pointing out this timid man as infinitely bold and dangerous, and showing to his friends especially that such a man would not be bound to any party, nor follow passively any discipline. Then it was, according to every appearance, the Jacobin nobles agreed among themselves that this ambitious man should be the ridicule of the Assembly,—the man who amuses and must necessarily amuse everybody, without any distinction of party. In the

general *ennui* of numerous assemblies, there is always somebody (often not the most ordinary person) who is thus sacrificed for the amusement of all. These moments of hilarity are those in which parties become less distant, when, the most implacable enemies laughing altogether, concord is for a moment restored, and there remains but one foe.

To make a man ridiculous, there is one easy way ; which is, for *his friends* to smile whenever he speaks. Men are generally so frivolous, so easily led, and so cowardly imitative, that a smile from the left side, from Barnave or the Lameths, infallibly excited the risibility of the whole Assembly. One man alone seems to have taken no part in these indignities ; and this was the truly powerful Mirabeau. He used always to reply seriously and respectfully to this weak adversary, respecting in him the image of fanaticism, sincere passion, and persevering labour. He shrewdly distinguished, but with the indulgence and generosity of genius, Robespierre's profound pride, the religious faith that he had for himself, his person, and his words. "That man will go far," said Mirabeau, "for he believes all he says."

The Assembly, rich in orators, had a right to be difficult to please ; accustomed as it was to Mirabeau's lion-looking countenance, to Barnave's bold self-conceit, to the passionate Cazalès, and to Maury's insolent declamation, it found displeasure in beholding Robespierre's mean countenance, his stiffness, and timidity. The constant tension of his muscles and his voice, his straining utterance, and his short-sighted look, left a painful, tiresome impression, which people tried to get rid of by laughing at him. To complete the measure of annoyance, they did not allow him even the consolation of seeing himself in print. The journalists, through negligence, or perhaps on the recommendation of Robespierre's *friends*, cruelly mutilated his most elaborate speeches. They were obstinately bent on not knowing his name, always designating him as *a member*, or M. N., or Mr. \* \* \*.

Thus persecuted, he seized the more eagerly every opportunity of raising his voice ; and this invariable resolution of speaking on every occasion, sometimes made him truly ridiculous. For instance, when the American Paul Jones came to congratulate the Assembly, after the president had replied and

everybody had considered his answer sufficient, Robespierre was obstinately resolved to give his reply likewise. Neither murmurs, interruptions, nor anything was able to stop him. After a great deal of trouble, he managed to say a few insignificant, useless words, and only by appealing to the galleries, claiming the freedom of opinion, and exclaiming that they were trying to drown his voice. Maury caused the whole Assembly to laugh by voting that M. de Robespierre's speech should be printed.

To forget such mortifications, so extremely galling to his vanity, Robespierre had no resource, neither family nor the world: he was alone and poor. He used to carry home with him his mortification to his deserted neighbourhood, the Marais, and to his lonely apartment in the dismal Rue de Saintonge: a cold, poor, and ill-furnished lodging. He lived parsimoniously and very sparingly on his salary as a deputy; moreover, he sent one quarter of it to Arras for his sister; another quarter was allotted to a mistress who loved him passionately, but seldom saw him; his door was often closed against her; neither did he treat her well.\* He was very frugal, dining for thirty sous; and yet he scarcely had money enough to purchase clothes. When the Assembly decreed a general mourning for the death of Franklin, Robespierre was extremely embarrassed. He borrowed a black stuff coat of a man much taller than himself; and the coat dragged four inches on the ground. "Nihil habet paupertas durius in se quàm quòd ridiculos homines facit." (*Juvenal.*)

He betook himself to work with greater energy. But he had hardly time except at night, passing whole days, invariably assiduous at the Jacobins and the Assembly: unwholesome, crowded rooms, which gave Mirabeau a serious ophthalmia, and caused Robespierre to suffer from a frequent hæmorrhage. If I may trust to the difference which is found between his portraits, his constitution must then have undergone a considerable alteration. His face, which till then had borne a

\* I owe this particular and several others to M. Villier's work (*Souvenirs d'un déporté*, 1802), who lived with Robespierre the greater part of the year 1790, and often served him gratuitously as a secretary. In other respects, I have almost always followed the *Mémoires de Charlotte de Robespierre*, printed at the end of the *Œuvres de Robespierre*, by M. Laponneraye.

somewhat soft and youthful expression, seems to have become suddenly harsh ; and an extreme concentration of the faculties, or a sort of contraction became the predominant character. Indeed, he had nothing that can unbend the mind. His sole pleasure was to polish and improve his speeches, which were pure enough but very insipid ; by labour he got rid of his commonplace facility, and contrived at length to write with elaboration.

What did him the greatest service, was his setting himself apart from his own party, isolating himself, once for all, and breaking off his acquaintance with the Lameths, in order no longer to be shackled by equivocal friendship. One morning, when Robespierre went to the Lameths' mansion, they either could not, or would not, receive him ; and he never returned.

Shaking off men of expedients, he constituted himself the man of principles.

The part he now had to play was prominent and simple ; and he became the principal obstacle to those whom he had forsaken. At every compromise that those worldly-minded party-men attempted to make between principles and interests, between right and circumstances, they met with a stumbling-block, abstract, absolute right, opposed to them by Robespierre. Against their spurious, Anglo-French, and self-styled constitutional solutions he brought theories, not specially French, but general, universal, according to the Social Contract, the legislative ideal of Rousseau and Mably.

They intrigued and agitated ; but he remained immutable ; they meddled in everything, tampered, negotiated, and compromised themselves in every way ; but he merely professed. They seemed like attorneys ; he a philosopher, a priest of justice. He could not fail to wear them out in time.

As a faithful witness of principles, and even protesting in their favour, he seldom explained himself about their application, or ventured on the dangerous ground of ways and means. He told them *what ought* to be done, but seldom, very seldom, *how it could* be done. Yet this is the point where the politician engages his responsibility the most, and where events often happen to contradict him and prove him to be wrong.

It was, however, easy to have a hold on such an Assembly, wavering, advancing, retiring, and losing sight, every moment,



of the principle of the Revolution, its own principle by which it existed.

And what was this principle? Nobody expressed it in a precise formula; but everybody had it in his heart. It was right, no longer the right of things (properties, fiefs), but *the right of men*, the equal right of human souls, an essentially spiritualist principle, whether this characteristic were perceived or not. It was followed at the first elections, in which all men, proprietors or not, equally voted in its favour. The Declaration of Rights acknowledged the equality of men, and everybody understood that this implied the equal right of citizens.

In October, 1789, the Assembly allows the electoral right only to those who will pay the value of three days' labour; and from six millions afforded by universal suffrage, the electors are reduced to 4,298,000 of francs. The Assembly was then afraid of two opposite things, the popular factions of the towns, and the aristocracy of the rural districts; it was afraid of bestowing suffrage on the two hundred thousand beggars of Paris, without speaking of the towns, and a million of peasants dependent on the nobles.

This was specious in the year '89, but much less so in '91. The rural districts which had been supposed servile, had, on the contrary, generally proved friendly to the Revolution; the peasants had almost everywhere embraced the natural hope of the new order of things, and had married in great numbers, sufficiently indicating thereby that they did not separate the idea of order and peace from that of liberty.

The faith of the people was immense; the Assembly ought to have put faith in them. People little know how many blunders and acts of treachery it required to deprive them of this sentiment. At first, they believed in everything, in ideas and men, ever endeavouring, by a too natural credulity, to incarnate their ideas in their idols; one day the Revolution would appear in Mirabeau; on the morrow in Bailly or Lafayette; even the harsh and disagreeable countenances of such as Barnave and the Lameths, inspired them with confidence; and being perpetually deceived, they transferred elsewhere their inveterate necessity of believing.

In this manner the hearts of the people had opened, and their minds had expanded. Never had there been a more



rapid transformation. Circe changed men into beasts ; but the Revolution did precisely the contrary. However little prepared men had been, the rapid instinct of France had supplied the difference ; so that a vast number of ignorant persons began to understand public affairs.

Now, to tell those fervent, intelligent, energetic multitudes, that had voted in 1789, that they had no longer this right, to reserve the name of active citizens for the electors, and to lower the non-electors to the rank of passive citizens, of non-citizen citizens,—all this appeared a sort of counter-revolution. But still more strange was it to say to the electors thus reduced : you shall choose only the rich. Indeed, they were able to elect as deputies only such as paid at least the value of a silver marc (fifty-four francs).

The debates which arose several times on this subject furnished the constitutional party and the economists with an opportunity of displaying candidly their gross, materialist doctrines, on the right of property. The latter went so far as to maintain that proprietors alone were members of society, and that it belonged to them ! \*

The question of the exercise of political rights, so great in itself, was the more so by the consideration that the 1,300,000 judges, assessors of judges, and administrators, created by the Assembly, were to be chosen only among the *active* citizens. They went still further, and endeavoured to confine to the latter the national guard, thus disarming the victorious people who had just made the Revolution.

This distrust testified towards the people, this middle-class materialism, which can perceive no guarantee for order but in property, was ever gaining ground in the Constituent Assembly. It increased at every riot. Such men as Sièyes, Thouret, Chapelier, and Rabout de Saint-Etienne, were now always retrograding, unmindful of their previous conduct. What is still more strange is, that those who possessed the watch-word of insurrection, which they occasionally gave out, such as Dupont, Lameth, and Barnave, were by no means confident,

\* These unintelligent disciples of Quesnay and Turgot did not perceive that their masters had exaggerated the *right* of the land only in order to inflict on it more surely the *duty* of paying taxes, at a period when it was entirely in the hands of the priests and nobles.

and voted, as deputies, laws to disarm those whom they had agitated as Jacobins. The position of these three men was singularly double and whimsical in the year 1790. Their popularity had extended to its utmost by their struggle with Mirabeau in the important debate on the right of making peace and war. And yet did their opinions differ very seriously or essentially? What were they in reality? Royalists.

Accordingly, the only man in the world that Mirabeau hated, from first to last, was he in whom he perceived most plainly a party duplicity—Alexandre de Lameth.

If Lameth, Duport, and Barnave seemed to make only the least advance towards Mirabeau's party, they left room for Robespierre who was rising in importance at the Jacobins. They were very much embarrassed at their position as vanguard, but would not abandon it; they shuffled, hesitated, and made use of all the expedients that cunning and intrigue could supply. However, the progress of events was so rapid that, if they wished to restore any authority to the kingly power, it was very necessary to use dispatch. Charles de Lameth was applauded when he reproached the executive power with "pretending to be dead." This reproach was sincere; for the Lameths perceived that this power, so weakened by themselves, would bury them beneath its ruins, and really desired to restore it to activity.

This appeared evident in the Nancy affair. They voted with Mirabeau, in favour of Lafayette and Bouillé, against the soldiers whom the Jacobin society of which they were the leaders, had not a little contributed to excite into rebellion.

The Assembly, under this frankly or timidly retrograde influence, voted, on the 6th of September, that for two years there should be no primary assemblies,—that the electors already appointed by the primary electors should exercise the electoral power for two years.

The Lameths had for sometime repented of having voted (from animosity against Mirabeau) the decree that prohibited deputies from being ministers. They did not doubt but, under the present circumstances, any kind of change might place the sovereign power in their hands or those of their friends. Accordingly, they earnestly insisted on intreating the king to dismiss the ministers, and, by means of a riot, they contrived

at once to drive away Necker. Contrary to every expectation, the Assembly refused to pray for the dismissal of the others ; and Camus, Chapelier, the Bretons, and the two hundred deputies of the left voted against the motion. It became necessary to employ a grand demonstration of the sections of Paris, who demanded, no longer the dismissal, but the trial of the ministers. This desire was presented to the Assembly through the medium of Danton ; and this first appearance of this head of Medusa sufficiently testified that they would not hesitate to employ any means of intimidation.

The Court which, at this period, placed its hope in the excess of evils, and was desirous of stating, before Europe, that royalty was no more, would have wished the king to intreat the Assembly to choose the ministers itself. Mirabeau received a hint of the affair, and violently opposed it, doubtless fearing lest the Assembly should choose the ministers among its usual leaders, and abrogate in their favour the decree that debarred the deputies from the ministry.

The triumvirate perceived from that moment that it would never be able to induce the Court to place them in power. The Lameths, brought up at Versailles in the king's favour, knew well that their ingratitude rendered them objects of personal hatred ; this induced them to take a very serious step which, for the time being, shows them to be falling off from Louis XVI. and siding with the party of the Duke of Orleans.

On the 30th of October, the bishops had published their *Exposition de principes*, a manifesto of resistance, which placed all the lower clergy, favourable to the Revolution, under a sort of ecclesiastical Reign of Terror. By way of retaliation, the Jacobins decided, on the 31st, that a newspaper should be formed to publish in extracts the correspondence of the society with those of the Departments,—a formidable publication which would bring to light an enormous mass of accusations against the priests and nobles. Such a journal, which would necessarily denounce so many men to the hatred of the people (nay, perhaps to death) was, in reality, a terrible organ for the man who was to choose and extract from that immense chaos, the names of the devoted parties ; was about to be invested, as it were, with a strange and unprecedented power which might have been called the dictatorship of information.

The upper leaders of the Jacobins were still, at this period, Duport, Barnave, and Lameth. Who was the grave censor, the pure and irreproachable man to whom they intrusted this power? Who would believe it? To the author of the *Liaisons dangereuses*, Choderlos de Laclos, the well-known agent of the Duke of Orleans. He it was who, in the *Cour des Fontaines*, in the very shadow of the Palais-Royal, and at his master's door, published, every week, this collection of accusations, with the title of *Journal des Amis de la Constitution*, an inexact title; for at that time it did not publish the debates of the society of Paris, but seemed to make a mystery of them; it published *only the letters that it received* from the provincial societies, and which were full of collective and anonymous accusations; to which Laclos added some article or other, at first insignificant, but afterwards unaffectedly in favour of the Orleans party; so that for seven months (from November to June) Orleanism was pervading France under the respected cloak of the Jacobin Society. Thus this great popular machine, being perverted in purpose, was working for the advantage of possible royalty.

The leaders of the Jacobins would doubtless not have made this strange compromise, if the pecuniary assistance of the Orleans party had not been indispensable to them in the movements of Paris. The Court, which saw everything too late, began to regret that it had not made any attempt to gain over these dangerous men. It first addressed itself to the well-known vanity of Barnave (December, 1790); and afterwards to the Lameths (April, 1791). It asked advice of Barnave,\* c. Mirabeau, of Bergasse, of everybody, and it deceived everybody, listening, as we shall see, to nobody but Breteuil, the adviser of flight, civil war, and vengeance.

The public were not in the secret of all these shameful intrigues; but they guessed them instinctively. On whatever side they turned, they found no safe person, no man in whom they could place any confidence. From the galleries of the Assembly and from those of the Jacobins, they were looking and hunting for a countenance of honesty and probity. Of those of their defenders, some expressed only intrigue, fatuity, and insolence; others only corruption.

• Mémoires de Mirabeau, VIII., 362.

One countenance alone comforted them, and seemed to say, "I am honest ;"\* and the dress of the man and his gesture seemed to express the same. His speeches were entirely on morality and the interests of the people,—principles, eternally principles. The man himself was not entertaining, and his person was austere and melancholy, by no means popular, but rather academical, and, in one respect, even aristocratical, in extreme cleanliness, neatness, and style of dress. He seemed also a stranger to friendship and familiarity : even his former college companions being kept at a distance.

In spite of all these circumstances, little calculated to make a man popular, the people so hunger and thirst after righteousness, that the orator of principles, the partisan of absolute right, the man who professed virtue, and whose sad and serious countenance seemed its very image, became the favourite of the people. The more he was disliked by the Assembly, the more he was relished by the galleries ; so, he addressed himself more and more to this second assembly, which, from above, presided over the deliberations, believed itself in reality superior, and, as the people, the sovereign authority, claimed the right of interfering, and hissed its delegates.

For this reason, he would naturally acquire a still greater ascendancy at the Jacobins. First, he was wonderfully assiduous and indefatigable, being ever at his post, and ever speaking on every subject. With assemblies, as with women, assiduity will ever be considered the principal merit. Many members became tired, sick of the task, and deserted the club. Robespierre would sometimes tire out his auditory, but was never tired himself. The old members departed ; but he remained ; new ones came in great numbers, and there they ever found Robespierre. These new members, not yet deputies, but fervent and impatient to arrive at public affairs, already formed, as it were, the Assembly of the future.

Robespierre was devoid of political audacity, that sentiment of power which induces men to grasp authority ; neither did

\* His face, which was always melancholy, wore not at this period the spectral and sinister expression that it later assumed. A fine medal, still extant, (by Hudon, or his school, in the possession of M. Lebas), expresses, if it be a faithful likeness, benevolence and rectitude, with, however, a strong, and perhaps ambitious tension of the countenance.



his mind soar into the regions of speculation : he followed too closely his masters,—Rousseau and Mably. Lastly, he was devoid of an extensive knowledge of men and things ; he was but little acquainted with history or the European world. But, by way of compensation, he possessed, more than all others, a persevering will, a conscientious, admirable, and indefatigable industry.

Moreover, at the very outset, this man, whom they supposed to be made up of principles and abstractions, had a clear perception of the real state of things. He knew perfectly well (what neither Sièyes nor Mirabeau seemed to know) *where power resided*, and where he was sure to find it.

The strong ever wish to make power, to create it themselves ; but politicians go and seek it where it is.

There were then two powers in France, two vast associations,—one eminently revolutionary, the *Jacobins* ; the other, profiting by the Revolution, seemed able to be easily reconciled to it ; I mean the *lower clergy*, a body of eighty thousand priests.

This was the general opinion, without anybody examining whether morally, in all sincerity, the very idea of Christianity can be reconciled with that of the Revolution.

Robespierre, judging the matter as a politician, did not try to discover in the depths of the new principle a form of new association. He took what already existed, and believed that whoever had on his side the Jacobins and the priests, would be near possessing everything.

A very simple, but very powerful, means of attaching the priest to the Revolution, was to allow him to marry ; and Robespierre made this proposal on the 30th of May, 1790. Twice he attempted to make himself heard ; but his voice was drowned by the general uproar of the whole Assembly, which appeared unanimously resolved not to hear him. The left, according to every appearance, was unwilling to allow Robespierre to get the start of them on so vital a question. A fact worthy of remark, and attributable only to the influence of the principal Jacobin leaders, is that the newspapers were agreed not to print his speech,\* just as the Assembly had been not to

\* Perlet speaks of it, and so do a few others ; but no mention is made of it in the principal newspapers,—neither in the *Révolutions de Paris*, the



hear it. The rumour of it was not the less extensive among the clergy. Some thousands of priests wrote to Robespierre, expressing their earnest gratitude. In one month, he received letters to the amount of a thousand francs, and verses in every language, whole poems of 500, 700, and 1500 verses, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Robespierre continued to speak in favour of the clergy.\* On the 16th of June, he asked the Assembly to provide for the subsistence of ecclesiastics who were seventy years of age and had no benefices or pensions. On the 16th of September, he protested in favour of certain religious orders that the Assembly had unjustly reckoned among the Mendicants. Again, at the last hour, on the 19th of March, 1791, when, in open ecclesiastical warfare, the lower clergy, led away by the bishops, left but little hope of their being ever able to be reconciled with the spirit of the Revolution, Robespierre protested against the measures of severity proposed, and said it would be absurd to make a special law against the *factionous speeches of priests*: that nobody could be prosecuted for speeches.

This was advancing too far, and exposing himself to be attacked. A member on the left exclaimed: "*Go over to the right!*" He felt the danger, stopped short, reflected, and became prudent. He would have compromised himself, had he continued this patronage to the priests, in the critical state of affairs at that time. Nevertheless, they must have known and felt quite sure, that, if the Revolution ever halted, they would find a protector in that politician.

The Jacobins, by their party spirit, which went on increasing,

*Révolutions de France et Brabant*, the *Courier de Provence*, the *Point du Jour*, the *Ami du Peuple*, nor in the *Moniteur*, (nor in the *Histoire Parlementaire*, which follows too subserviently the *Moniteur*, both in this and other matters; for instance, in the voluntary error committed by the *Moniteur*, relative to the pretended generosity of the clergy on the night of the 4th of August. See my Vol. I., p. 215.)—M. Villiers relates that Robespierre was affected by the numerous thanks in verse which he received. Dining with M. Villiers, he said to him—"It is said there are no longer any poets; you see that I can make some."

\* On one single occasion, he appeared adverse to them; but it was an occasion in which it was impossible to be favourable to them, when a clerical deputy demanded that ecclesiastics should be elected by ecclesiastics: to except them from the universal rule, election by the people, would have been constituting them as a body.

by their fervent and relentless faith, and by their keen and searching inquisitiveness, partook somewhat of the character of the priest. They formed, so to speak, a revolutionary clergy, of which Robespierre became gradually the chief.

In this character, he displayed extraordinary prudence, seldom being the first to propose any new measure, but expressing the opinions and being the organ of the Jacobins, without ever outstepping them in their progress. This is especially conspicuous in the question on the kingly power. The unanimity of the memorials sent to the States-General induced the Jacobins to believe that France was royalist. Therefore Robespierre wanted to have a king; not a king a *representative* of the people, as Mirabeau desired, but delegated by the people and appointed by them,—consequently responsible. He admitted, as almost everybody did at that time, the idle hypothesis of a king to be held chained, gagged, and muzzled, who, doubtless, would not be able to bite, but who, being shackled to such a degree, would most certainly be inert and useless, or rather noxious.

The Jacobins were then, as Barnave believed, and they have almost always been, relatively speaking, even in the most violent action of the Revolution, a society of equilibrium.

Robespierre used to say, in speaking of the Cordelier Camille Desmoulins (therefore, with greater reason, of the other Cordeliers still more impetuous): “They are going too fast; they will break their necks; Paris was not made in a day; and it requires more than a day to unmake it.”

The audacity and the grand *initiative* of the Revolution belonged to the club of the Cordeliers.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CORDELIERS.

Revolutionary History of the Convent of the Cordeliers (Franciscan Friars) —Energetic individualities in the Club of the Cordeliers.—Their faith in the People.—Their impotency of organisation.—Marat's irritability.—The Cordeliers still a young Club in 1790.—Enthusiasm of the moment.—Interior appearance of the Club.—Camille Desmoulins against Marat.—Théroigne among the Cordeliers.—Anacharsis Clootz.—The two-fold spirit of the Cordeliers.—One of Danton's Portraits.

ALMOST opposite the *École de Médecine*, you will perceive, at the bottom of a court-yard, a chapel of a plain but solid style of architecture. This is the sibylline den of the Revolution, the Club of the Cordeliers. There was her frenzy, her tripod, and her oracle. Low, and supported moreover by massive buttresses, such a roof must be everlasting: it heard the voice of Danton without being shaken to pieces!

At the present day, it is a gloomy surgical museum, adorned with scientific horrors, and hiding others still more horrible. The back part of the building conceals dismal rooms, and their black marble slabs, on which dead bodies are being dissected.

The neighbouring asylum and the chapel were originally the refectory of the Cordeliers and their celebrated school, the capital of the Mystic Theologians, where even their rival, the Jacobin Saint Thomas, came to study. Between the two buildings arose their church, with its vast dismal nave full of marble tombs. All this is now destroyed. The subterraneous church which extended underneath, concealed, for some time, Marat's printing establishment.

How strange was the fatality of this place! This edifice had belonged to the Revolution ever since the thirteenth century, and always to its most eccentric genius. There is not so much difference as might be supposed between those Cordelier friars and these Cordelier republicans, or between Mendicant friars and the Sans-Culottes. Religious disputation and political disputation,

the school of the middle ages and the club of 1790, rather differ in form than in spirit.

Who built this chapel? The Revolution itself, in the year 1240. Here it was that it gave the first blow to the feudal world, which it was to destroy on the 4th of August.

Note well these walls, which look as though they had been built but yesterday: do they not appear as unshaken as the justice of God? And, indeed, they were first founded by a striking visitation of revolutionary justice. The great lover of justice, Saint Louis, gave the first example of punishing crime in a great baron,—Sire de Coucy; and with the fine that he obtained from him, that monk-king (himself a Cordelier) built the school and church of the Franciscan friars.

That was a revolutionary school: about the year 1300, it resounded with the dispute on the *Eternal Gospel*; and there the question “Has Christ passed away?” was also proposed.

This truly predestined spot beheld, in 1357, the first Convention that saved France, when the king and the nobility were vanquished and taken prisoners. The Danton of the fourteenth century, Etienne Marcel, the provost of Paris, there caused a sort of republic to be created by the States, sent thence the all-powerful deputies into the provinces to organise the requisition; and, the boldness of his proceedings inspiring him with still greater audacity, he armed the people with a motto, a memorable decree which intrusted the keeping of the public peace to the people themselves: “If the lords make war on one another, honest folks shall fall upon them.”

O strange and prodigious delay! that it should have required four centuries more to reach '89!

The faith of the ancient Cordeliers, eminently revolutionary, was the inspiration or *illumination* of the simple and poor. They made poverty the first Christian virtue, and carried its ambition to an incredible degree, even to be burnt to death rather than make any change in their Mendicant robe. True Sans-Culottes of the middle ages in their animosity against property, they went beyond their successors of the Club of the Cordeliers and the whole revolution, not excepting Babœuf.

Our revolutionary Cordeliers have, like those of the middle ages, an absolute faith in the instinct of the simple; only, instead of divine light, they term it popular reason.

Their genius, entirely instinctive and spontaneous, now inspired, now infuriated, distinguishes them profoundly from the calculating enthusiasm and the moody cold fanaticism which characterises the Jacobins.

The Cordeliers, at the period at which we have now arrived, were a far more popular society. Among them there did not exist that division of the Jacobins between the assembly of politicians and the fraternal society composed of workmen; neither was there any trace, at the Cordelier club, of the *Sabbat*, or directing committee; nor of a newspaper common to the club (except one transient attempt). Moreover, the two societies cannot be compared. The Cordeliers were a Parisian club: the Jacobins an immense association extending throughout France. But Paris would stir and rise at the fury of the Cordeliers; and Paris being once in motion, the political revolutionists were absolutely obliged to follow.

Individuality was very powerful among the Cordeliers. Their journalists, Marat, Desmoulins, Fréron, Robert, Hébert, and Fabre d'Églantine, wrote each for himself. Danton, the omnipotent orator, would never write; but, by way of compensation, Marat and Desmoulins, who stammered or lisped, used principally to write, and seldom spoke.

However, with all these differences, and this instinct of individuality, there seems to have been a very strong tie, a common attraction, among them. The Cordeliers formed a sort of tribe, all living in the neighbourhood of the club: Marat, in the same street, almost opposite, at the turret, or next to it; Desmoulins and Fréron, together, *Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie*; Danton, in the *Passage du Commerce*; Cloodt, in the *Rue Jacob*; Legendre, in the *Rue des Boucheries-Saint-Germain*, &c.

The honest butcher Legendre, one of the orators of the club, is one of the originalities of the Revolution. Although illiterate and ignorant, he did not speak less valiantly among the learned and literary members, without caring whether they smiled or not: as honest a man as any, notwithstanding his furious language, and a good-hearted man too in his lucid intervals. The heart-breaking farewell that he pronounced over the tomb of Loustalot very far surpasses all that was said by the journalists, without even excepting Desmoulins.

It was the originality of the Cordeliers to be and ever remain

mixed with the people, to speak with open doors, and communicate constantly with the crowd. Some of them who had lived the retired and sedentary life of the scholar or writer, pitched their study-camp in the open street, worked amid the crowd, and wrote on a stone post for a desk. Casting aside their books, they studied only that immense volume which, displayed before their eyes every day, was written in characters of fire.

They believed the people, and put faith in their instinct. To justify this faith to themselves, they brought to its service much good sense and a good heart. Nothing is more affecting, for instance, than to behold the charming sensible Camille Desmoulins in the open space before the Odéon and the *Comédie Française*, going among the masons and carpenters who were philosophising in the evening, discoursing with them on theology, just as Voltaire would have done, and, overjoyed with their wit, exclaiming: "They are Athenians!"

This faith in the people caused the Cordeliers to be omnipotent among them. They possessed the three revolutionary powers, and, as it were, the three characters of the thunderbolt: thundering and startling eloquence, a fiery pen, and inextinguishable fury,—Danton, Desmoulins, Marat.

This was their power; but it formed also their weakness,—the impossibility of organisation. The people seemed to them entire in each individual. They placed the absolute right of the sovereign in a town, a section, a simple club, a citizen. Any man would have been invested with a *вето* against France. In order the better to make the people free, they subjected them to the individual.

Marat, furious and blind as he was, seems to have perceived the danger of this anarchical spirit; and proposed very early the dictatorship of a military tribune, and later the creation of three State Inquisitors. He seemed to envy the organisation of the Jacobin society; and, in December, 1790, proposed to institute, doubtless on the plan of that society, a brotherhood of spies and informers, to watch and denounce the agents of the government. This idea was not carried out; and Marat became alone his own inquisition. Informations and complaints, just or unjust, founded or unfounded, were forwarded to him from every side; and he believed them all, and printed them all.



Fabre d'Eglantine has used the words "Marat's sensitiveness" (*sensibilité*), and these words have astonished those who confound sensitiveness with kindness, and know not that over-excited sensitiveness may become furious. Women will occasionally be cruel through sensitiveness. Marat, in his constitution was a woman, nay more womanish, being extremely nervous and plethoric. His physician, M. Bourdier, used to read his newspaper; and when he beheld it more sanguinary than usual, and "inclining to red," he went to bleed Marat.\*

The violent, sudden transition from a life of study to revolutionary commotion, had attacked his brain, and made him like a drunken man. The counterfeiters and imitators of his paper, who, assuming his name and title, forged upon him their own opinions, contributed not a little to increase his fury. He would trust to nobody for prosecuting them; but would go himself in chase of their hawkers, watching for them at the corners of the streets, and sometimes catching them at night. The police, on its side, was in search of Marat, to arrest him; and he was obliged to fly wherever he could. His poor and wretched manner of living and his forced retirement, rendered him the more nervous and irritable; in the violent paroxysms of his indignation and his compassion for the people, he relieved his furious sensitiveness by atrocious accusations, wishes for massacres, and counsels for assassination. His distrust ever increasing, the number of the guilty and of the necessary victims likewise increasing in his mind, this *Friend of the People* would in time have exterminated the people.

When in presence of nature and grief, Marat became very weak; he was unable, says he, to see an insect suffer; but alone, with his pen and ink, he would have annihilated the world.

Notwithstanding the services he may have done the Revolution by his restless vigilance, his blood-thirsty language and the habitual levity of his accusations had a deplorable influence. His disinterestedness and courage invested his madness with authority; he was a fatal preceptor of the people, perverted their good sense, and often rendered them weak and furious like himself.

Moreover, this strange and exceptional creature cannot enable

\* This is what M. Bourdier himself related to M. Serres, our illustrious physiologist.

us to judge of the Cordeliers in general. No one of them, taken separately, can make us acquainted with the others. We must behold them seated together at their evening meeting, fermenting and raging together like the bottom of a volcano. I will endeavour to lead you thither ; be not faint-hearted ; but come with me.

I will introduce you to them on the very day when their genius of audacity and anarchy burst forth triumphant among them ; the day when, opposing their *veto* to the laws of the National Assembly, they have just declared that “ on their territory ” the press is and shall be indefinitely free, and that they will defend Marat.

Let us take them at this hour. Time passes quickly, and they will soon change ; but now they still retain something of their primitive nature. Let but one year only pass, and you would not know them for the same. Let us therefore look at them to-day. Moreover, let us not hope to fix definitely the likenesses of these shadows ; they change and pass away ; and, even as we are following them, a mad impetuous torrent of blood and filth will presently arise and sweep us away.

I wish to behold them to-day. They are still a young assembly in 1790, relatively, at least, to the ages that will pass over their heads before 1794.

Yes, even Marat is young at this moment. Notwithstanding his long and sad career of forty-five years, and although consumed by work, passion, and vigil, he is young with vengeance and hope. This doctor without a patient, takes France for his patient, and will bleed her ; this slighted physician will annihilate his enemies ; and the Friend of the People hopes to avenge the people and himself, both ill-treated and despised.\* But their turn is beginning. Nothing will stop Marat ; he will fly and conceal himself, and, carrying his pen and his press from cellar to cellar, will live a stranger to the light of day. In that gloomy existence, a woman, his printer's wife, who has left her husband to make herself the companion of this lawless

\* I shall deeply examine this character. Here I give only an outward Marat, Marat as a Cordelier, Marat in 1790. In Chapter IX., I shall show how this scientific terrorist, who expected to annihilate Newton, Franklin, and Voltaire, became the political terrorist. Later, I shall show him as the exterminating tyrant of 1793

being, beyond the pale of nature and daylight, is obstinately resolved to follow him. She comforts and takes care of him, however filthy, hideous, and poor he may be; and she prefers to everything else to be Marat's servant, even in the bowels of the earth.

O generous instinct of woman! It is also this same instinct that bestows, at this moment, his charming and beloved Lueile on Camille Desmoulins. He is poor, and in danger; that is the reason why she will have him. The parents would gladly have seen their daughter choose a name less compromised; but it was precisely the danger that tempted Lueile. She used every morning to read his fervent articles, so full of earnest passion and genius, those satirical, eloquent pages inspired by the fleeting events of the day, and yet stamped with immortality. She accepted every chance,—life or death with Camille; obtained at length the consent of her parents, and herself, laughing and weeping, informed him of his happiness. The witnesses of their marriage were Mirabeau and Danton.

Many others acted like Lueile. The more uncertain the future appeared, or the more cloudy the horizon, the more did those who loved, hasten to unite their destiny, run the same risk, and place and stake their lives on the same card,—the self-same die! A moment of tumultuous emotion, mingled with delight, like the eve of a battle, or of an interesting, amusing, and terrible drama.

This feeling pervaded everybody in Europe. If many Frenchmen departed, yet many foreigners came to visit us; they sympathised heartily in all our agitations, and espoused the cause of France; and even though they were to die here, they preferred doing so to living elsewhere; for, at least, if they died here, they were sure of having lived.

Thus, the witty and cynical German, Anarcharsis Clootz, a wandering philosopher (like his namesake the Seythian), who spent his hundred and fifty thousand francs (60000*l.*) a-year on the high roads of Europe, halted, and settled here, and was only to be removed hence by death. Thus, Gusman, the Spaniard, a grandee of Spain, turned Sans-Culotte; and, in order to remain always in that atmosphere of insurrection which caused his delight, he took lodgings in an attic, in the heart of the faubourg Saint-Antoine.

But why did I halt? Let us hasten to the Cordeliers. What a crowd! Shall we be able to enter? Citizens, make a little room for us; comrades, you see I have brought a stranger. The noise is deafening; and by way of compensation, one can scarcely see! Those smoking little lamps seem there only to render darkness visible. What a mist envelopes the crowd! The air is dense with the hum and shouting of men!

At the first glance everything appears strange and unusual. Nothing can be more fantastical than this motley crowd of well-dressed men, workmen, students (among whom, observe Chaumette) and even priests and monks; for, at this period, several of the ancient Franciscans visit the very place of their servitude, to relish liberty. Here we behold an abundance of writers. Look at that affected Fabre d'Églantine,—the author of *Philinte*; and that dark-haired man,—Robert the republican, a journalist who has just married Mademoiselle Keralio,—a fellow-journalist. This other, with a vulgar-looking countenance, is the future Père Duehesne (Hébert). Beside him, is the patriotic printer, Momoro, the husband of the pretty woman who will one day become the Goddess of Reason. Alas! poor Reason, she will perish with Lucile. Ah! if all here did but know their fate!

But who presides yonder? Surely, the King of Terrors himself! What a frightful visage has that Danton! Is this a cyclop or some goblin? That large face, so awfully seared by the small-pox, with its small dull eyes, looks like a brooding volcano. No, that is not a man, but the very element of confusion, swayed by madness, fury, and fatality! Awful genius, thou frightenest me! Art thou to save or ruin France?

Look, he has distorted his mouth, and all the windows have shaken at his voice!

“La parole est à Marat!”

What! is that Marat? that livid creature in green clothes, with those yellow and prominent grey eyes... It must surely belong to the batrachian genus rather than to the human species.\* What marsh has produced this hideous creature?

\* The only important likeness of Marat is that by Boze. Those done by

And yet his eyes have rather a mild expression. Their brilliancy and transparency, and their strange wandering manner, gazing on vacancy, would lead one to suppose that this must be some visionary, at once a quack and a dupe, pretending to second-sight; a vain and especially credulous street-prophet, believing everything, above all, his own lies, all the involuntary fictions into which he is incessantly impelled by a spirit of exaggeration. His empirical habits, and especially the circumstance of having sold his specifics in the street, give him this turn of mind. The *crescendo* will be terrible; he must find out or invent, and shout from his cellar at least one miracle every day, and lead on his trembling subscribers through a series of treasons, discoveries, and alarms.

First, he returns thanks to the Assembly.

Next, his face begins to glow. He has a great terrible treason to unfold! A new plot has been discovered! . . . See how happy he is to tremble and make others tremble. See how the conceited and credulous creature has become transfigured! His yellow skin is shining with perspiration.

"Lafayette has ordered fifteen thousand snuff-boxes, all ornamented with his likeness, to be made in the faubourg Saint-Antoine . . . There is something suspicious in this. I entreat all good citizens who are able to procure any, to destroy them. I am sure that the secret of the great plot will be found in them."\*

Some persons laugh; others think that the matter ought to be inquired into; that it is worth while.

Marat continues, with a frown: "I said, three months ago, that there were six hundred guilty persons, and that six hundred ropes would settle the business. What an error! . . . We cannot manage now with less than twenty thousand."

Thunders of applause!

David are not very striking. One may also consult the likeness in plaster, taken after death, (though, perhaps, it has been corrected a little), and the bust that was at the Cordelier club. (in Colonel Maurin's collection).

\* *Ami du Peuple*, No. 319, Dec. 23, 1790.—Marat's credulity is everywhere conspicuous. In No. 320, Louis XVI. is bitterly weeping over the follies which the Austrian (the queen) has caused him to commit. In No. 321 the queen has given away so many white cockades, that the price of white ribbon has risen three sous an ell. This is a positive fact; for Marat has heard so from one of the maids of La Bertin, (the queen's milliner), &c., &c.



Marat was beginning to be the favourite, the idol of the people. In the vast number of attacks and ill-omened predictions with which he filled his newspapers, several had come true, and gained for him the reputation of seer and prophet. Already three battalions of the Parisian guard had prepared for him a petty triumph, which ended in nothing, promenading his bust crowned with flowers through the streets. His authority had not reached the terrible point that it attained in 1793; and Desmoulins, who respected gods as little as kings, would occasionally laugh at the idol Marat, as much as at the idol Lafayette.

Without paying any attention to the delirious enthusiasm of Legendre, who, transfixed with admiration, was all attention, relishing and believing all he heard,—and without remarking his fury at any kind of interruption, the bold little man thus familiarly apostrophised the prophet: “Ever tragic, friend Marat, hypertragic, tragicotatos! We might reproach thee, as the Greeks did Eschylus, with being rather too ambitious of this surname . . . But, no; thou hast an excuse; thy vagabond life in the catacombs, like that of the primitive Christians, fires thy imagination . . . Come, tell us seriously, are these nineteen thousand four hundred heads that thou addest, by way of amplification, to the six hundred of the other day,—are they really indispensable? Wilt thou not bate one? We must not do extravagantly what may be done economically. I should have thought that three or four plumed heads, rolling at the feet of Liberty, would have sufficed for the catastrophe of the drama.”

The partisans of Marat were furious with indignation; but a noise is heard at the door, a friendly hum of welcome, that prevents them from replying; and a young lady enters and desires to speak. Why, this is no other than Mademoiselle Théroigne, the handsome amazon of Liege! Behold her in her red silk riding-habit, and armed with her large sabre of the 5th of October. The enthusiasm is at its height. “It is the Queen of Sheba,” cries Desmoulins, “who has come to pay a visit to the Solomon of our district.”

She has already passed through the whole of the Assembly, with the springing gait of a panther, and ascended the tribune. Her beautiful, inspired countenance, beaming with enthusiasm



appears between the sombre apocalyptic visages of Danton and Marat.

“If you are truly Solomons,” said Théroigne, “you will prove it by building the temple, the temple of liberty, the palace of the National Assembly. And you will build it on the spot where the Bastille formerly stood.”

“What! whilst the executive power inhabits the finest palace in the world, the pavilion of Flora and the porticoes of the Louvre, the legislative power is still encamped in tents, at the Tennis-Court, the Menus, or the Riding-School—like Noah’s dove, that can find no resting-place?”

“Things cannot remain so. The people must learn, by simply beholding the edifices which the two powers inhabit, where sovereign power resides. What is a sovereign without a palace, or a god without an altar? Who will acknowledge his worship?”

“Let us build up that altar; and let all contribute, bringing their gold and precious stones (for my part, here are mine). Let us build up the only true temple. No other is worthy of God than that where they pronounced the declaration of the rights of man. As guardian of that temple, Paris will be less a city than the common Patria of all others, the meeting-place of the tribes, their Jerusalem!”

“The Jerusalem of the world!” exclaimed the enthusiastic auditory; for a real frenzy, an ecstatic joy, had possessed the whole Assembly. If the ancient Cordeliers, who had formerly given free course to their mystic ravings, under those same vaulted roofs, had returned that evening, they would still have found themselves at home among their fellows; for, all of them, whether believers or philosophers, disciples of Rousseau, Diderot, Holbach, or Helvetius, all prophesied, in spite of themselves.

The German Anacharsis Clootz was, or imagined himself to be, an atheist, like so many others, from hatred of the evils that priests have occasioned (*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*) But with all his cynicism and his ostentation of doubt, this son of the Rhine, and fellow-countryman of Beethoven, felt strongly all the emotion of the new religion. The most sublime words inspired by the great confederation are in a letter from Clootz to Madame de Beauharnais; nor did any-

body express any more strangely beautiful on the future unity of the world. His accent, his German slowness of utterance, his smiling serene countenance, and that beatitude of a mad genius, inclined to jest with itself, added amusement to enthusiasm.

“Why, indeed, has nature,” said he, “placed Paris at an equal distance from the pole and the equator, but for it to be a cradle and a metropolis for the general confederation of mankind? Here, the States-General of the world will assemble; and I predict that the time is not so remote as people believe. Let but the Tower of London fall to pieces, like that of Paris, and tyrants will be no more. The flag of the French cannot wave over London and Paris, without soon being hoisted all round the globe . . . Then there will be no longer either provinces, armies, conquerors, nor conquered nations . . . People will go from Paris to Peking, as they do from Bordeaux to Strasbourg; the ocean, by a bridge of ships, will join her shores; and the east and the west will embrace in the field of confederation. Rome was the metropolis of the world by war; Paris will be so by peace. Yes, the more I reflect, the more I conceive the possibility of one single nation, and the facility with which the Universal Assembly, sitting at Paris, will conduct the government of the whole human race. Ye rivals of Vitruvius, listen to the oracle of reason; if universal patriotism kindles your genius, you will know well how to make us a temple to contain all the representatives of the world; there are wanting scarcely more than ten thousand.

“Men will be what they ought to be, when each will be able to say: ‘The world is my country, the world is my own native land.’ Then, there will be no more emigrants. There is but one nature, and one society. Divided powers clash together, and nations are like clouds which necessarily burst against each other.

“Tyrants, your thrones are crumbling beneath you. Abdicate, and you shall suffer neither misery nor the scaffold . . . Ye usurpers of sovereignty, look me in the face. Do you not behold your sentence written on the walls of the National Assembly? . . . Come, do not wait for the fusion of sceptres and crowns; come forth to welcome a Revolution which delivers kings from the snares of kings, and nations from the rivalry of nations!”

“Long live Anacharsis!” exclaimed Desmoulins. “Let us open with him the cataracts of heaven. It is nothing that reason has drowned despotism in France; it must also inundate the globe; and all the thrones of kings and Lamas must be washed from their foundations by this universal deluge . . . What a career from Sweden to Japan! The Tower of London is shaken. An innumerable meeting of Irish Jacobins has had, for its first sittings, an insurrection. At the rapid rate at which things are going, I would not give a shilling for the estates of the clergy of the Church of England. As for Pitt, he is destined to be hanged (*lanterné*), unless, by the loss of his place, he prevent the loss of his head, which John Bull is about to demand . . . The inquisitors are already being hanged on the Mançanarez; the breath of liberty is blowing strong from France to the South; and presently people may safely say—‘There are no longer any Pyrenees!’”

“Cloutz has just transported me, as the angel did the prophet Habakkuk, into the upper regions of policy; and I now throw back the barrier of the Revolution to the uttermost parts of the world!”\*

Such is the originality of the Cordeliers. It is Voltaire among fanatics! For indeed this amusing Desmoulins is a true son of Voltaire; and one is surprised to behold him in this pandemonium, and to hear his good sense, reason, and lively sallies, in this fantastical assembly, where one would say that our prophets of the Cevennes, the inspired members of the Long Parliament, the quakers and shakers, had met together. The Cordeliers, properly speaking, form the connecting link of ages; their genius, like Diderot’s,—at once a sceptic and a believer,—recals to mind, at the end of the eighteenth century, some-

\* I need hardly say that I have derived the whole of this chapter from Desmoulins and Marat’s newspapers, merely joining what is there divided, and scarcely changing a word. Desmoulins, after expressing his half-serious half-comic enthusiasm for the ideas of Cloutz, adds, in order to mingle the *utile dulci*: “I was about to lay down my pen; for the deafness of an ungrateful people had discouraged me. I now conceive hope, and establish my newspaper as a *permanent journal* . . . We invite our dear and beloved subscribers, whose subscription is now expiring, to renew it, not in Rue de Seine, but at our house, Rue de Théâtre-Français, where we shall continue to cultivate a branch of commerce hitherto unknown, a manufactory of revolutions.”

thing of the ancient mysticism wherein would occasionally gleam the light of the future.

But how stormy does that future still appear ! How gloomy, sublime, yet murky and deadly, does it glare in the countenance of Danton !

I have now before me a portrait of this terrible and too cruelly-faithful personification of our Revolution,—a portrait that David had sketched and then left, dismayed and discouraged, feeling himself unequal to the task of painting such an object. A conscientious pupil resumed the work, and simply, carefully, and even servilely, painted every particular, every hair, showing all the marks of the small pox, every inequality, on the surface of that distorted countenance.

It is like a difficult and arduous sketch of some vast, confused, impure, and violent creation, as when nature was still hesitatingly preparing her work, without being sure whether she would make men or monsters ; and when less perfect, but more energetic, she stamped with a terrible hand her gigantic effort.

But how much more affinity and harmony is there between the most discordant creations of nature, in comparison to the moral discord which we here behold ! I fancy I hear a low, hurried, atrocious dialogue, like some inward struggle, the broken sentences of the conscience exclaiming against itself !

What frightens one the most, is that he has no eyes ; at least, they are scarcely perceptible. What ! is this terrible blind man to be the guide of nations ? . . . What we read here is obscurity, madness, fatality, and an utter ignorance of the future.

And yet this monster is sublime. This face, almost without eyes, seems like a volcano without a crater,—a volcano of horrors, or of fire,—which, in its pent-up furnace, is brooding over the struggles of nature . . . How awful will be the eruption.

In that hour, an enemy, frightened at his language, but doing justice, even in death, to the genius that blasted him, will describe him with these ever-memorable words, “ The Pluto of eloquence.”

That face is like a nightmare, from which one cannot escape,—a horrible oppressive dream, which is ever recurring to the

mind. We become mechanically attracted towards this visible struggle of opposite principles ; we sympathise with the inward struggle which is not only a warfare of the passions, but one of ideas,—the impotency of reconciling them, or of annihilating one by the other. It is a devoted Œdipus, who, possessed with his own enigma, carries within his breast a terrible sphynx that will devour him.\*

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### IMPOTENCY OF THE ASSEMBLY.—THE OATH REFUSED. (NOVEMBER, 1790, TO JANUARY, 1791.)

ALEXANDRE DE LAMETH informs us that, in the month of June, 1790, a patriotic society invited him and his brother, with Duport and Barnave, to one of their banquets, which, composed of two hundred persons, male and female, was truly Spartan, in its patriotic austerity and frugality. The guests being seated, the president arose, and solemnly pronounced the first article of the Declaration of Rights : “ Men are born and remain free, &c.” The Assembly listened in solemn silence, and this serious stillness lasted throughout the repast. On the table was a miniature Bastille ; and at the dessert, the conquerors of the Bastille, who were among the guests, drew their swords, and, without saying a word, broke the Bastille to pieces, whence a child sprung up decked with the cap of liberty. The ladies placed civic crowns upon the heads of the patriotic deputies, and the dinner ended as it had begun, the president pronouncing, as a thanksgiving, with the same

\* This portrait (belonging to M. de Saint Albin’s collection) represents, in my opinion, Danton in 1790, at the moment when the plot of the drama began to thicken,—Danton relatively young, in a complete and abundant possession of flesh, vigour, life, and strength. It is Danton *before*. A small, but admirable, likeness, sketched by David with a pen, in a nocturnal meeting of the Convention, shows us Danton *after*,—Danton at the end of 1793, with his eyes then wide open, but sadly sunken ! venting terror, but evidently broken-hearted ! Nobody can behold this tragic picture without a feeling of grief,—without involuntarily exclaiming, “ Alas ! cruel, unfortunate man ! ” Between these two solemn portraits, there are two rough sketches in profile by David ; but they show such a mystery of grief and horror, that I will not yet speak of them. All that will come but too soon.



sombre gravity, the second article of the Declaration of Rights: "The aim of every association, &c."

This president was Romme the mathematician, then tutor to the Princes Strogonoff. He had felt loss of liberty, where it is keenly felt, in Russia; and, in the depths of slavery, had drunk of the cup of the Revolution. Intoxicated, but calm at the same time, this geometrician was about to apply inflexibly the new principle, and, by a vast subtraction of human cyphers, arrive at the unknown. This immutable calculator at the head of the *Montagne* descended on the 2nd Prairial, only to plunge his compasses in his heart.

The Lameths shuddered to perceive themselves in an entirely new world: the noble and elegant Jacobins of 1789 perceived here the true Jacobins.

They themselves confessed that this man, who presided like a marble statue, these legislative texts, said for prayers, and the solemn silent behaviour of these fanatics "seemed to them altogether frightful." They began to sound the ocean upon which they were entering; for, till then, they had been, like children, sporting on the surface. But how many revolutionary generations were they removed from these men! They could hardly comprehend them. They were well acquainted with the street agitators, the workmen of the insurrection, whom they employed and set to work; they knew also the violent journalists, the noisy club orators: but the most noisy were not the most formidable. Beyond all these feigned or genuine angry passions, there was something cold and terrible which they had just touched; they had hit upon the steel buckler of the Revolution.

They shivered with dread, and retreated. At least they wanted to retreat, but knew not how to do so. They appeared the vanguard and the leaders, and every eye was fixed upon them; for the Jacobin trinity (Duport, Barnave, and Lameth) was hailed as the pilot of the Revolution to conduct it forward. "These men at least are firm and candid," would the people say; "they are not like Mirabeau." Desmoulins exalts them beside Robespierre; and even Marat, the distrustful Marat, has not yet suspected them.

Nevertheless they owed this excellent position much rather to their dexterity than to their strength; and people could not



fail to perceive their weak side, their fluctuating conduct and equivocal character; they first discovered Barnave's emptiness; next, the intrigues of the Lameths; and Duport was known at last.

Singular to relate, the first blow, a dash of ridicule, was given by a hand by no means hostile, by the giddy spoiled child Camille Desmoulins, who was ever saying aloud what many others thought, often certain things that people had tacitly agreed not to speak of; and, on reading his newspaper in the morning, his friends would sometimes perceive very bitter truths. On this occasion, it was on the subject of the motion for the dismissal of the ministers. Desmoulins derides the Assembly, "which always keeps M. Barnave's harangue for the grand *finale*, and then closes the discussion." This time, however, it was not necessary, as people say, to "take away the ladder." In the same article, this shrewd writer uses an original but just expression, which lashes not only Barnave but almost all the orators and writers of the time: "In general, the speeches of the patriots are too much like the hair worn in the year 1789, *flat and without powder*. Where wast thou, Mirabeau?" Afterwards, he asks why the Lameths cried out "divide" (*aux voix!*) when Petion and Rewbell wanted to speak; "when the herculean Mirabeau, with his club, was going to crush those pigmies, &c."

A few days later, a heavier blow, from which he never recovered, fell upon Barnave. Brissot, the journalist, a republican doctrinaire, of whom I shall soon speak more fully, wrote, on the subject of the men of colour, whose rights Barnave annulled, a long and terrible letter against him, in which he exposed the advocate as self-sufficient, brilliant and empty, full of sentences, and devoid of ideas. Brissot, generally too light a writer, but, on this occasion, strong in argument, traces severely the portrait of a true patriot, and this portrait is found to be the reverse of Barnave's. A patriot is neither intriguing nor jealous; neither does he seek popularity in order to be feared by the court and to make himself a necessary acquisition. A patriot is not an enemy of ideas; neither does he vent a long train of abuse against philosophy. Were not the greatest citizens of antiquity Stoic philosophers, &c.

But what compromised the party of Barnave and the Lameths

the most, was, that at the time when Lameth's duel rendered him very popular, they did not hesitate to declare themselves on the slippery question of the National Guard. Till then, on dangerous occasions, they had remained silent, or voted silently with their adversaries; this course had been conspicuous in the Nancy affair, wherein unanimity had proved that the Lameths had voted as the others.

The Assembly, as we have said, was afraid of the people; it had at first impelled them forward, and now it wanted to bring them back. In May, it had encouraged the arming of the people, declaring that no man was an active citizen unless he belonged to the National Guard. But in July, at the time when the Confederation showed plainly, however, that the Assembly might put confidence in the people, it made the strange motion to require a uniform, which was indirectly disarming the poor. And in November, a more direct proposal was made by Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, that of confining the National Guards to *active* citizens alone. The latter, as we have seen, were very numerous, amounting to four millions. But, such was the strange state of France at that time and the different condition of the provinces, that in several, in Artois, for instance, there would have been hardly any active citizens or National Guards. This is what Robespierre adroitly pointed out with great energy, extending and exaggerating this observation, very just as relating to his own province: \* “Do you wish then,” said he, “that a citizen should become a rarity?” We may easily imagine the applause and clatter of the galleries!

On the night of the 21st of November, Robespierre supported this thesis at the Jacobins'; and Mirabeau was president. In the continual fluctuation of the favour of the people, who on one day would laud him to the skies, and on the morrow desire to strangle him, he had aimed at this presidency in order to support his popularity by that of the Jacobins. It would be easier to count the waves of the ocean than these alternate changes in favour of Mirabeau; he and the public were like two angry quarrelling lovers. Camille Desmoulins

\* It was also stated, though probably erroneously, that the suburb Saint-Antoine would have but two hundred electors.

is admirable in this matter, being never cool or indifferent : one day he terms him an adored mistress ; on the next a harlot.

Mirabeau had fallen in public opinion by his proposing a vote of thanks to Bouillé ; but he had recovered his lost ground by a terrible speech against those who had dared to insult the tricolour,—one of those ever-memorable orations, which render it impossible for this man, even though he were still more culpable, and in spite of whatever may be said, to be ever erased from the memory of France. And then he had lost ground again, by proposing to postpone the annexation of Avignon, and show still some deference to the pope ; but he had recovered once more, by merely showing himself at the theatre, when “ Brutus ” was reproduced for the first time : the very sight of him caused all to be forgotten, and rekindled love and enthusiasm, “ *veteris vestigia flammæ* ;” he captivated the general attention ; and numerous allusions were addressed to him. It was a signal triumph, but his last.

This happened on the 19th of November. On the 21st, Mirabeau, presiding at the Jacobins, listened impatiently to Robespierre’s speech on the National Guard being restricted to *active* citizens ; and he undertook to silence him under the pretext that he was speaking against previous decrees. This was a serious and dangerous proceeding, before an impassioned Assembly entirely in favour of Robespierre. “ Continue, continue,” was shouted from all sides of the hall. The tumult became excessive : it was impossible to hear anything, either the president or his bell. Mirabeau, instead of putting on his hat, as president, took a very bold step, which would either give him the advantage, or make his defeat the more conspicuous. He mounted upon his arm-chair ; and, as though the decree attacked was in his own person, and the question was to defend and save it, he exclaimed : “ Help, colleagues ! Let all my friends surround me ! ” This perilous demonstration rendered Mirabeau’s solitude bitterly evident. Some thirty deputies obeyed his call ; but the whole of the Assembly remained with Robespierre. Desmoulins, an old college companion of the latter, and who loses no opportunity of exalting his character, says, on this occasion : “ Mirabeau surely did not know that if idolatry be permitted among a free people, it is only for virtue.”

This was also a great revelation of the serious change which the Jacobin club had already undergone. Although founded by the deputies and for themselves, it contained now but a very few, who, moreover, had but little weight. Easy admission had replenished the club with earnest and impatient men; the Assembly was doubtless in it; but it was the future Assembly, to which alone Robespierre addressed himself.

Charles de Lameth now arrived, with his arm in a sling; and everybody became silent; for they were convinced that he was for Robespierre; yet he spoke for Mirabeau! But Viscount de Noailles declared that the committee had understood the decree differently from Mirabeau and Lameth, and in the same light as Robespierre. The latter then resumed his speech, with the whole Assembly on his side, and the president then reduced to silence—Mirabeau reduced to silence!

The Lameths are now in a very critical position. These founders of the Jacobins see them escaping from their hands. Their popularity dated especially from the day when they opposed Mirabeau on the right of making peace and war; and now they find themselves compromised and associated with Mirabeau in the distrust of the people; they must sink and be drowned, if they do not find means to separate themselves violently from this man, to throw him overboard; and if, on the other hand, their warfare against the clergy did not restore them in public opinion.

It is quite fair to say that the priests were doing all that was necessary to merit persecution. They had been skilful enough to leave in the dark the question on ecclesiastical estates, and to bring the question of the oath prominently forward in the light of day. This oath, which interfered in no way with religion or the sacerdotal character, was unknown to the people, who naturally believed that the Assembly was imposing on the priests a kind of abjuration. The bishops declared that they would have no communication with the ecclesiastics who might take the oath. The most moderate said that the pope had not yet replied; that they would wait; that is to say, that the judgment of a foreign sovereign was to decide whether they might obey their native land.

The pope did not answer. Why? On account of the vacation. The congregation of the cardinals, it was said, did

not assemble at that period of the year. Meanwhile, by means of curates, and of preachers of every rank and denomination, they strove to agitate the people, make the peasantry furious, and reduce the women to despair. From Marseilles to Flanders, there arose one immense and admirable chorus against the Assembly ; and incendiary pamphlets were hawked about from village to village by the curates of Provence. At Rouen and Condé, they preach against the paper-money, as an invention of the devil ; at Chartres and Peronne, they forbid, from the pulpit, the paying of taxes ; and the curate bravely proposes to go, at the head of the people, and massacre the tax-gatherers ! The sovereign chapter of Saint-Waast despatches missionaries to preach with all their might against the Assembly ; whilst, in Flanders, curates lay down the law, in strong set terms, that the purchasers of the national estates were infallibly damned, both they themselves, their children, and posterity : “ Even though we wished to give them absolution,” said those furious fanatics, “ could we do so ? No, nobody could, neither curates, bishops, cardinals, nor the popes ! Damned they are, and damned they will remain, for ever ! ”

A considerable portion of these facts were brought to light and diffused among the public by the correspondence of the Jacobins, and by Lacroix's newspaper ; and they were collected and arranged in a report which Voidel, the Jacobin, made to the Assembly. Mirabeau supported the report by a long and magnificent speech, in which, under cover of violent language, he inclined towards gentle means, restricting the oath to the priests who were confessors ; and he wanted the Assembly to trust to time and extinction to weaken the power of the clergy.

But the Assembly was more bitter ; it wanted to chastise them ; so it required that the oath should be taken, and immediately.

One thing surprises us in this Assembly, composed, for the most part, of Voltairian lawyers ; which is its simple faith in the holiness and efficacy of human speech. After all the sophistry of the eighteenth century, there must still have remained a vast fund of ingenuous childish simplicity in the hearts of men.

They imagine that the very moment the priest has sworn, the very day the king has sanctioned their decrees, everything is concluded and saved.



But the king, on the contrary,—an honest man of the old system,—goes on lying all day long. The word of honour which they had believed to be so great a difficulty, an insurmountable obstacle, a binding agreement for the man, by no means embarrasses the king. For fear he should not be sufficiently believed, he goes beyond all bounds ; speaks over and over again of the *confidence he deserves*, saying that he expresses himself *openly and frankly*, and is surprised that any doubts should arise on the *well-known uprightness of his character* . . . (Dec. 23rd and 26th, 1790).

The Jansenists—the most simple of all—do not remain satisfied with this ; they want something real and positive,—breath and noise.

Therefore, the 27th of November witnesses a terrible decree : “ The Assembly desires earnestly that the bishops, curates, and vicars, should take the oath to the constitution, *within a week* ; otherwise they will be considered to have renounced their office. The mayor is bound to denounce, eight days afterwards, such as fail to take the oath. Those who, after taking the oath, should break it, are to be summoned to the tribunal of the district ; and such as, having refused, should continue any part of their former functions, will be prosecuted as disturbers of the peace.”

Decreed, not sanctioned!—This is a new cause of alarm for the Jansenists, who have entered so far. They want some result ; therefore, on the 23rd of December, Camus votes “ that force should interpose,” force in the form of a prayer ; that the Assembly *prays* the king to reply to it in a regular manner about the decree. Now, force was the very thing that the king was waiting for.\* He immediately replies that he has sanctioned the decree : for thus he can tell all Europe that he is forced to act, and a captive.

He said to M. de Fersen, “ I would rather be the king of Metz . . . But all this will soon be ended.”

What is worthy of remark, is, that neither Robespierre,

\* However, it is not exact to say, as Hardenberg does (in his *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*) that it was *after* this forced sanction that the king applied to the foreign powers. He had done so from the 6th of October to the 3rd of December. On the latter day he writes to Prussia, that he has already applied to all the sovereigns ; whereas he did not give the sanction till the 26th of December.



Marat, nor Desmoulins, would have required the oath from the clergy. The intolerant Marat, who demands that the presses of his enemies should be broken, desires that the priests should be gently treated. "It is," says he, "the only occasion on which regard should be shown; for it is a matter of conscience." Desmoulins desires no other severe measure than to take away the money of the state from those who will not swear obedience to the state. "If they hold fast to their pulpit, let us not expose ourselves even to tear their linen gowns in dragging them from it . . . That species of demons called Pharisees, *calotins*, or princes of the clergy, is to be driven away only by fasting: *non ejicitur nisi per jejunium*."

The severe, impolitic, and unreasonable measure of demanding the oath of the ecclesiastical deputies in the Assembly itself, was a sad blunder committed by the predominant party. It gave the refractory a grand, glorious, and solemn opportunity of bearing testimony before the people for the faith that they did not possess. The Archbishop of Narbonne said, later, during the empire, "We behaved like true noblemen; for it cannot be said of the greater number of us that we did so from motives of religion."

It was easy to foresee that these prelates, reduced to the extremity of yielding to numbers, and of solemnly denying their official opinion, would reply like noblemen. The most feeble character, when thus beset, would show some spirit; for whether noblemen or not, they were at least Frenchmen. The curates the most favourable to the Revolution could not resolve to abandon their bishops at the critical moment. The constraint shocked them; the danger was captivating; the solemn grandeur of such a scene exalted their imagination, and they refused.

On the first day of the debate, when the Bishop of Clermont alone was questioned, the Assembly was able to judge of the effect. On the following day, (January 4th), Grégoire and Mirabeau attempted to appease the storm. Grégoire said that the Assembly by no means meant to meddle with spiritual affairs; that it even did not require the inward assent, and would not force their conscience. Mirabeau went so far as to say that the Assembly did not require precisely the oath; but merely that it declared a refusal incompatible with such

functions,—that, by refusing to swear, they incurred their dismissal. This was affording them a means of escape ; but Barnave blocked up every issue, by a bitterly violent speech, doubtless expecting thereby to regain ground in public opinion ; and he proposed and obtained that the oath should be ordered to be taken that very hour.

This imprudent measure would necessarily have the effect of inducing the clergy to decide on a refusal. The refusers were about to have the glory of disinterestedness, and also that of courage ; for the doors were besieged by a crowd, whose threats could be heard. In this matter, both parties accuse each other ; these say that the Jacobins attempted to carry this measure by intimidation ; those, that the aristocrats posted a noisy crowd, in order to establish the fact, that they were subjected to violence, to render their adversaries odious, and to be able to say, as in fact they did, “that the Assembly was not free.”

The president orders the first name to be called.

“The Bishop of Agen.”

*The Bishop.*—“I ask permission to speak.”

*The left.*—“No speech ! Do you take the oath ? Yes, or no ? ” (*Noise without.*)

*A Member.*—“Let the mayor go and put an end to this disturbance ! ”

*The Bishop of Agen.*—“You have said that those who refuse shall forfeit their duties. I feel no regret for the loss of my place ; but I should regret to lose your esteem ; I therefore beg you to receive the assurance of the sorrow I feel at not being able to take the oath.”

Another name is called.

*Fournès (a curate).*—“I will speak with the simplicity of the primitive Christians . . . I consider it a glory and an honour to follow my bishop, even as Laurent followed his pastor.”

*Leclerc (a curate).*—“I am a child of the Catholic church.”

This calling of names succeeding so badly, a member remarked that it had not been required by the Assembly, that it was not free from danger, and that they ought to be satisfied with asking the oath to be taken *collectively*. This collective demand met with no better success. The only advantage the Assembly derived from it was to remain for a quarter of an

hour, or more, silent and powerless, and to give the enemy an opportunity of uttering a few noble sentences, which could not fail, in a country like France, to raise up many enemies against the Revolution.

*The Bishop of Poitiers.*—"I am seventy years of age, thirty-five of which I have passed in the episcopacy, where I have done all the good I was able to do. Now, worn out by old age and study, I will not dishonour my grey hairs; I will not take an oath . . . (*Murmurs*). I will accept my fate in a spirit of penitence."

This fate was by no means terrible. The bishops left the Assembly without any peril, and returned thither, just as they pleased; for the indignation of the crowd did not occasion any act of violence.

The 4th of January was a triumph of the priests over the lawyers. The latter, in their awkwardness, had put on the priests' old garment of intolerance, so fatal to the wearer; and their dangerous position had inspired the clerical nobles with happy and excellent language, which acted like a weapon against their adversaries. The majority of these bishops who spoke so well, were, however, only intriguing courtiers of bad reputation, who, had they lived in our more serious modern society, which expects to find virtue and knowledge in the priest, would, sooner or later, have been obliged, by shame, to withdraw; but the profound policy of such men as Camus and Barnave had found the true means of gaining over the people to their side, of making them Christian heroes, and consecrating them by martyrdom.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FIRST STEP OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.

THE year 1791, so sadly commenced by the scene of the 4th of January, presents from the very first the appearance of a fatal change, a violent contradiction to the principle of the Revolution: liberty trampling upon the rights of liberty,—an appeal to force.

Whence arose this appeal to physical force? Wonderful to relate, from the most cultivated minds,—from legists, physicians, scholars, and writers, intellectual men, who, by urging forward the blind multitude, wanted to decide intellectual matters by a material agency.

Marat had managed to organise a sort of warfare in Paris among the conquerors of the Bastille. Hulin and others, who had enlisted in the salaried National Guard, were denounced by him to the vengeance of the people, "as Lafayette's spies;" and not satisfied with giving their names, he added their address, the street and the number, so that, without any inquiry, the people might go and assassinate them. His newspaper was really a list of proscription, wherein he wrote inconsiderately, and without any examination or control, all the names that were dictated to him. Names that had been dear to humanity ever since the 14th of July, Elie and M. de la Salle, forgotten by the ingratitude of the new government, were nevertheless inscribed by Marat pell-mell with the others. He himself confesses that, in his precipitation, he confounded La Salle with the horrible De Sade, an infamous and blood-thirsty author. On another occasion, he inscribed among the moderate or Lafayette party, Maillard, the hero of the 5th of October, and the judge of the 2d of September.

In spite of all his violence or criminal levity, Marat's evidently sincere indignation against abuses caused me, I must confess, to feel somewhat interested about him; and then again, the grand title of *Friend of the People* claimed from history a serious examination. I have therefore religiously prepared the trial of this strange being, reading, pen in hand, his journals, pamphlets, and all his works.\* I knew, from many instances, how often the sentiment of justice and indignation and pity for the oppressed, may become violent and occasionally cruel passions. Who has not often seen women, at the sight of a child beaten, or even an animal ill-treated, give way to the utmost fury? Was Marat furious only from sensitiveness, as several persons seem to believe?—Such is the first question.

If it be so, we must say that sensitiveness has strange and fantastical effects. It is not alone a severe judgment or an exemplary punishment that Marat calls for against those whom he accuses; death would not suffice. His imagination thirsts for torments; he would have flaming stakes, conflagrations, and atrocious mutilations: † "Brand them with a hot iron, cut off their thumbs, slit their tongues," ‡ &c., &c.

Whatever may be the object of such rage, whether supposed to be guilty or not, it does not the less degrade the man who gives way to it. This is not the serious and sacred indignation of a heart truly affected by a love of justice. One would rather take it to be the ravings of a delirious woman, suffering from hysterical convulsions, or falling into a fit of epilepsy.

What is still more surprising, is that these transports, which some would explain as the excess of fanaticism, proceed from no precise faith

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\* The reader will understand, moreover, that in preparing to pass judgment on this man, I thought I ought not to refer to any of Marat's enemies; I have acquired my information generally from his own works; and it is on his own testimony that I will condemn or acquit him.

† *Ami du Peuple*, No. 327, p. 3, January 1st, 1791: No. 351, p. 8, January 25th, 1791.

‡ *Ibid.*, No. 305, p. 7, Dec. 9th, 1790; No. 325, p. 4, Dec. 30th, 1790, &c., &c.

that can be characterised. So much indecision, with so much rage, is a fantastical spectacle; he rushes about in a fury,—but whither? He could not tell you.

If we are to seek Marat's principles, we must not look for them in the works of his youth (of which I shall speak hereafter), but in those that he wrote in the prime of life, in 1789 and 1790, at the moment when the great crisis of political events was able to increase his powers and transport him above his usual level. Not to mention the *Ami du Peuple*, begun at this period, Marat published, in '89, "*La Constitution, or a project of declaration of rights, together with a plan for a just, wise, and free constitution*;" moreover, in '90, his "*Plan of Criminal Legislation*," of which he had already given an essay in 1780; he offered the latter work to the National Assembly.

In a political point of view, these works, extremely weak, contain nothing to distinguish them from an infinite number of pamphlets which then appeared. Therein, Marat is a royalist, and decides, that in every great state the form of government *ought to be monarchical; which is the only one suited to France* (Constitution, p. 17). "*The prince ought to be responsible only in his ministers; his person is to be sacred*" (p. 43). Even in February 1791, Marat still remained a royalist.

In a social point of view, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can be called proper to the author. We behold with pleasure, however, the particular attention he gives to the lot of women, and his solicitude to repress libertinism, &c. This part of his plan of criminal legislation is excessively developed, and there are some observations and useful views which plead in excuse for certain unseemly and misplaced details, for instance, the description of the old libertine, &c. (*Législation*, p. 101).

The remedies which the author wishes to apply to the evils of society are but trivial, such as one would scarcely expect to see proposed by a man of his age and experience,—a physician forty-five years old. In his Criminal Legislation, he demands Gothic penalties against sacrilege and blasphemy (penance at the church-doors, &c. p. 119, 120); and, in his Constitution, he speaks nevertheless with levity of Christianity and religions in general (p. 57).

These two works would certainly not have attracted any attention, if the author had not started with an idea that can never fail to be well received, and which must have then been singularly so, in the extreme misery of a capital overburdened with two hundred thousand poor: *The weakness or the uncertainty of the right of property, the right of the poor man to take his share*, &c. &c.

In his Projected Constitution (p. 7), Marat says, in proper terms, in speaking of the rights of man: "When a man is in want of everything, he has a right to take from another the superfluity in which he is wallowing; nay more, he has a right to take from him his necessary things; and, rather than starve, has a right to cut his throat and devour his palpitating flesh." He adds, in a note (p. 6): "Whatever offence he may commit, whatever outrage he may do against his fellows, he no more troubles the order of nature than a wolf does in devouring a lamb." In his book on Man, published in 1775, he had already said: "Pity is a factitious sentiment, acquired in society . . . Never speak to a man of ideas of good-



ness, meekness, and kindness, and he will remain ignorant all his life, even of the name of pity" (vol. i. p. 165).

Such, according to Marat, is the state of nature,—a terrible state ! The right of taking from one's fellow creature, not only whatever superfluity he may have, but his *necessary things*, nay his flesh, and of eating it !

After this, one would think that Marat goes far beyond Morelly, Babeuf, and others, and that he would found either perfect community or a strict equality of properties. This would be a mistake. He says, in his Constitution (p. 12), "that such an equality could not exist in society ; that it is not even in nature ;" we must merely desire to draw as near to it as possible. He moreover confesses, in his Criminal Legislation (p. 19), that the division of lands, although just, is nevertheless *impossible and impracticable*.

Marat consigns to a state of nature, anterior to society, this frightful right of taking even our neighbour's necessary things. But, does he acknowledge property in a social state ? Yes, generally, it should seem. However, in his Criminal Legislation (p. 18), he seems to confine it to *the fruit of labour*, without extending it to the land whence this fruit is produced.

On the whole, as a *socialist*, if people will give him this name, he is a wavering and inconsistent eclectic. In order to appreciate him, it would be necessary to compose (which we cannot do here) the history of that old paradox,\* which Marat ever approached, without absolutely embracing

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\* There is nothing new in these ideas. Absolute equality has been the eternal dream of humanity ; a fraternal community, a union of hearts and property, will ever be its sweetest and most impotent aspiration. We find attempts of it, every moment, in the middle ages, attempts favoured by the mysticism of those times, by a religion of privation and abstinence, and by the spirit of abnegation then prevailing. The modern spirit, very capable of devotion and sacrifice, is nevertheless very little inclined towards that easy abnegation, meekness, sacrifice, and annihilation of the will, that community requires. In these days, personality goes on characterising itself more and more forcibly ; accordingly, the chances of this essentially impersonal system are ever diminishing. This is true, especially of France, where the bulk of the agricultural population possesses the spirit of property in the highest degree.

The obstacle thus ever increasing, acrimony has also increased, as also an animosity against property, even when properly acquired, gained by labour, which would entail animosity against work and the workman. One word of Rousseau's has awakened the old passion and created a swarm of Utopians. They did not perceive that this word and this book (like the universal doubt which Descartes professed at his starting point) have but a transitory and relative value in Rousseau's whole life, and are even in direct contradiction with all his writings. It is the effort of a captive genius in an unjust society ; which, in order to take its flight, begins by denying it entirely and agitating its foundations ; afterwards, he makes use of them as a substructure, and by no means rejects whatever seems good.

To resume : *voluntary* community, founded on an enlightened union of minds, an alliance of souls, is incontestably desirable, but infinitely difficult.



it, that doctrine which one of our contemporaries has reduced to a formula in three words: "Property is theft:" a negative doctrine which is common to several sects, 'u other respects extremely opposed to each other.

Nothing is easier than to suppose a just and friendly society, perfect in heart, pure moreover and abstinent (an essential condition), which would found and maintain an absolute community of wealth. That of wealth is very easy, when one has that of hearts. Who, indeed, in love or friendship, is not a communist? Such a thing appeared between two persons in the last century, Pechméja and Dubreuil, who lived and died together. Pechméja attempted, in a poem in prose (the *Téléphe*, a work unfortunately weak and by no means interesting) to make others partake of the sweet emotion that he felt in having nothing of his own but his friend.

Pechméja's "*Téléphe*" did not teach community more efficaciously than Morelly's "*Basiliade*" and his Code of Nature had done already. All the poems and systems that can be made on this doctrine suppose, as a starting point, what is the most difficult thing of all, and would be the supreme aim,—the union of human will. This scarce condition, found at most in a few select souls, such as a Montaigne or a La Boétie's, would dispense with all the rest. But this condition is indispensable. Without

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Christianity, with resources which these men by no means possess, aimed at it, but failed. If it was unable to associate souls either vanquished or trained on purpose, good heavens! how difficult will be the task with the unconquerable modern mind! *Forced* community has no real chance in a country where twenty-four millions of souls partake of property. It may be attempted, by force of arms, in this or that town, but never throughout the whole country.

No doubt but in case of a revolution, or should present France, for instance, seriously revolt against England, that foreign power would find this an excellent advantage. It would be its best chance, if it succeeded in prolonging these interior struggles, for lowering France to a level with Ireland. This art is well known; it has succeeded perfectly well with the English in reducing Holland to nothing, and placing her under an English prefect. The party that had organised the great Dutch navy, braved England, and forced the Thames with their cannon, has been accused (not without cause) of egotistical cupidity, and conquered by the party called the people,—a cosmopolite party, made up of a multitude of foreigners, and urged on by the English.

Let us take warning by this example. No class will gain anything by dividing France and leaving her exposed to the enemy. It would be a sad thing to fight to the death for a bit of land, when the earth is so vast, still desert, and so badly cultivated! On the other hand, it is necessary that the State and the citizen should become noble-hearted, that we should open our arms to our brethren, that property should be more accessible to them, that education be given to all, and open to everybody the world and life, and that the laws of inheritance especially should be modified. I refrain from touching, in this note, so vast and serious a subject. There is a time for everything. Let it suffice to say here, that I should wish human will to be more respected by the law: for instance, that a father, having endowed his daughter and given his son a trade, should be free to bequeath what he possesses to the State or the poor, &c., &c.

it community would be a permanent struggle, or, if imposed by law, by a Reign of Terror (which cannot last long), it would paralyse all human activity.

To return to Marat, he appears nowhere to suspect the extent of these questions. He places them on his title-page, as though to attract the crowd, to beat the drum, and gain a hearing ; and then leaves everything unsolved. All we can see is that he wishes for an extensive social charity, especially at the expense of the rich : a thing certainly reasonable, only it would be better to state the mode of execution. Doubtless it is a thing odious and impious to see a certain tax oppressing the poor and sparing the rich ; taxation ought to be applied only to those who possess. But the politician ought not, like Marat, to confine himself to complaints, outcries, and prayers ; he ought to propose means. It is not a way of clearing up difficulties to refer the matter, as do all the Utopians of this kind, to the presumed excellence of the functionaries of the future ; to say, for instance : " Let the direction be given to some *honest man*, and let an *upright magistrate* be the inspector." (Marat's Criminal Legislation, p. 26).

Does he show, in his journal, more practical intelligence, in presence of the necessities of the times ? No. We find nothing but vague and unconnected ideas, nothing new by way of expedient, nothing that can be termed a theory.

At the time when the municipality was entering into possession of the convents and other ecclesiastical edifices, he proposed to establish in them workshops for the poor, to lodge poor families in the cells, and in the beds of the monks and nuns (June 11th and 14th, 1790). But there is no general conclusion relative to work directed by the State.

When the law on patents, the misery of Paris, and demands for an increase of salaries, attract his attention, does he propose any new remedy ? No other than to revive long and rigorous apprenticeships, to require proofs of capacity, *to fix a fair price to workmen for their daily task, and to give to workmen who behave themselves properly, for three years, the means of setting up in business* ; those who do not marry are to pay back this sum at the expiration of ten years.

Where are the funds vast enough to endow such numerous classes of the population ? Marat does not explain himself on this point ; only, on another occasion, he advises the indigent to associate themselves with the soldiers, *to get assigned to themselves wherewith to live out of the national properties, to divide among themselves the lands and riches of the villains who have buried their gold in order to force them by famine to return to the yoke, &c.*

I wanted, first of all, to examine whether Marat, in 1790, when he assumes so terrible an authority over the minds of the people, laid down a general theory, a principle which founded this authority. The examination being made, I am obliged to say No. There exists no theory of Marat's.

I can now resume, at my ease, his previous career, and seek whether, in the works of his youth, he may, by chance, have laid down this principle, whence perhaps he thought he had but to draw its consequences.

Marat was from the environs of Neufchâtel, as Rousseau from Geneva.

He was ten years of age, in 1754, at the time when his glorious fellow-countryman published his "Discourse on Inequality," and twenty, when Rousseau, having conquered the royalty of public opinion, together with persecution and exile, returned to seek an asylum in Switzerland, and took refuge in the principality of Neuchâtel. The ardent interest of which he was the object, the eyes of the world fixed upon him, the phenomenon of a literary man causing every king to be forgotten (not excepting Voltaire), and the emotion of women weeping for him (we might say in love with him) all this made a profound impression on Marat. His mother, as he himself describes her, was a very susceptible and enthusiastic woman, who, buried in a remote village of Switzerland, and being both virtuous and romantic, directed all her energies to form a great man, like Rousseau. She was very ably seconded by her husband, a worthy, learned, and industrious minister, who crammed very early all he could of his science into the head of his child. The natural result of this concentration of efforts was to overheat the youth's brain beyond measure. Pride, Rousseau's infirmity, turned to vanity in Marat, only exaggerated to a tenfold degree. He became Rousseau's ape.

We must hear his own account of himself (in the *Ami du Peuple* of 1793): "At five years of age I wanted to be a schoolmaster; at fifteen, a professor; at eighteen, an author; and a creative genius at twenty." Further, after having spoken of his works in the natural sciences (twenty volumes, says he, of discoveries in physics), he coolly adds: "I think I have exhausted every combination of the human mind, on morality, philosophy, and politics."

Like Rousseau, and most of the people of his country, he started early in quest of fortune, carrying with him, together with his ill-arranged store of different kinds of knowledge, the more profitable talent of deriving from simples a few empiric remedies; for, all these Swiss mountaineers are more or less botanists, druggists, &c.

Marat generally gives himself the title of doctor of medicine: I have not been able to discover whether he really possessed it.

This uncertain resource not supplying him sufficiently, he was occasionally, like Rousseau, like the hero of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, a teacher, a master of languages. In this capacity, or as a physician, he had an opportunity of ingratiating himself with ladies; and was for some time the Saint-Preux of a certain Julia whom he had cured. This Julia, a marchioness abandoned by her husband, who had been the cause of her malady, was captivated by the young physician's zeal, rather than by his personal qualities. Marat was very diminutive in stature, with a wide, bony, flat-nosed countenance. Nevertheless, he certainly possessed indubitable qualities,—disinterestedness, sobriety, indefatigable industry, and much, too much ardour; his vanity spoilt all the rest.

Switzerland has always furnished England with governesses and masters of languages; accordingly, in 1772, we find Marat teaching French at Edinburgh. He was then twenty-eight years of age, and had acquired, read, and written much, but published nothing. That very year, the publication of the Letters of Junius,—those famous yet mysterious pamphlets, the author of which has never been known, and which gave so terrible a blow to the ministry of that time,—was then

drawing to a close. The new elections were imminent, and England was in the utmost agitation. Marat, who had seen the terrible riot in favour of Wilkes (he speaks of it twenty years afterwards) ; Marat, who admired, and doubtless envied the triumph of the pamphleteer, suddenly become sheriff and lord mayor of London, composed in English a pamphlet which he made (like Junius) more piquant by publishing it anonymously : *The Chains of Bondage*, 1774. This book, much of which was suggested by Raynal, who had just appeared, is, as the author says, an extemporaneous composition, full of facts and various quotations ; its plan is not bad ; but unfortunately it is very weakly executed, and of an insipid declamatory style. It contains but few, and only limited views, no true perception of England ; Marat thinks all the danger lies on the side of the crown ; and is entirely ignorant that England is especially an aristocracy.\*

There had just appeared in London, in 1772, a French book that made some sensation, a posthumous work of Helvetius,—a sort of sequel to his book on the *Mind*,—and entitled *Man*. Marat lost no time ; in 1773, he published in English a volume in opposition, which, developed and spun out so as to form three volumes, was published by him, in 1775, with the following title : *On Man*, or the principles and laws of the influence of the soul on the body, and of the body on the soul, (Amsterdam).

The feeble and fluctuating eclecticism which we have remarked in Marat's political books and journals, appears singularly evident in this work of physiology and psychology. He seems to be a spiritualist, since he declares that the soul and the body are two distinct substances ; but the soul has hardly any advantage. Marat places it in an entire dependency on the body, declaring that what we call moral and intellectual qualities, as courage, candour, tenderness, wisdom, reason, imagination, sagacity, &c., are *not qualities inherent* in the mind or the heart, but the soul's manners of existing, *dependent on the state of the corporal organs* (ii., 377). Contrary to the spiritualists, he believes that the soul occupies a place ; and he places it in the meninges. He has an utter contempt for Descartes, the master of modern spiritualism. In psychology, he follows Locke, and copies him without quoting him (vols. ii. and iii., *passim*). In morality, he esteems and praises Laroche-foucauld (Disc. prélim., p. vii., xii.). He does not believe that pity or justice are natural sentiments, but acquired and factitious (vol. i., pp. 165, and 224, note). He assures us that man, in a state of nature, is necessarily a cowardly being ; and he thinks he proves "that there are no strong souls, since every man is irresistibly subject to sentiment, and the slave of passions" (vol. ii., p. 187).

As to the connecting link between the two substances, he promises

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\* Singular to relate, Marat, who had lived in England, knew the language and had studied the writers, the historians, does not at all understand that people ; and Sièyes, though ignorant in comparison, yet by the extraordinary penetration of his mind, discovers, with respect to England, of which he knows so little, things both just and profound, which the most attentive study of facts alone would seem to have been able to dictate.



new and decisive proofs. However, he gives none ; nothing but the vulgar hypothesis of a certain nervous fluid. He only informs us that this fluid is not entirely gelatinous, and the proof is that spirituous liquors, which so powerfully renew the nervous fluid, contain no gelatin (i., p. 56).

All the rest is of the same stamp. We learn therein that a melancholy man delights in melancholy, and other things equally novel. On the other hand, the author assures us that a wound is not a sensation ; " that reserve is the virtue of souls united to organs woven with lax or compact fibres," &c. Generally speaking, he emerges from banalities only by the help of absurdities.

If the work deserved criticism, that which might be brought against it is especially its indecision. Marat by no means assumes the attitude of a courageous disciple of Rousseau against the philosophers. He ventures a few feeble attacks against their old leader, Voltaire, inserting him in a note among the authors who make man an enigma : " Hume, Voltaire, Bossuet, Racine (!), Pascal." To this attack the arch old man replied by a witty, amusing, and judicious article, wherein, without expressing an opinion on the matter, he merely shows the author, as he is, a ridiculous quack ; " such is the fashion," says he, " we perceive everywhere a Harlequin throwing summersets to amuse the pit." (*Mélanges litt.*, tom. xlviii., p. 234, 8vo, 1784).

Although Marat speaks much of the prodigious success of his books in England, and of the gold boxes sent to him, he returned very poor ; and it was at this period that he is said to have been sometimes reduced to the necessity of selling his remedies in the streets of Paris. However, his last book was calculated to recommend him ; a would-be spiritualist physician could not be displeasing to the Court ; a book on *Médecine Galante* (I had forgotten just now to mention this character of the book *On Man*) was likely to be successful among young men at the court of the Count d'Artois. Indeed, the book has often a gallant tone, equivocal or sentimental scenes, confessions surprised, enjoyments, &c., &c., not to mention certain useful advice on the effect of excesses. Marat entered the establishment of the young prince, first in the humble capacity of physician to his stables, and later with the more dignified title of physician to his body-guards.

It is one of the melancholy features of the old system, that few, very few scholars or learned men, who afterwards became politicians, had been able to dispense with lordly protection : they all needed patronage. Beaumarchais was first employed by the princesses (Mesdames), and afterwards at Duverney's ; Mably, at the Cardinal de Tencin's ; Chamford, at the Prince de Condé's ; Rhulière's, at Monsieur's ; Malouet, at Madame Adélaïde's ; Lacroix, at Madame de Genlis' ; and Brissot, at the house of the Duke of Orleans, &c., &c. Vergniaud was brought up by the protection of Turgot and Dupaty ; Robespierre by the Abbé of Saint-Waast, Desmoulins by the Chapter of Laon, &c., &c. Marat had recourse to the protection of the Count d'Artois only late in life, and when compelled by misery ; and he remained in this establishment for twelve years.

In this new situation, he refrained from every kind of political or philosophical publication, and turned the whole of his attention to the

sciences. His poetic genius, which had not succeeded against Voltaire and the philosophers, now attacked Newton. He attempted no less than to overthrow that god from his altar, and rushed into a number of hasty, feverish, and trivial experiments, expecting to destroy Newton's theory of optics, which he did not even understand.\* Trusting little to scientific Frenchmen, he invited Franklin to behold his experiments. The latter admired his dexterity, but gave no opinion on the subject itself; and Marat, little satisfied, immediately set about working against Franklin. He wanted to upset his theory on electricity; and, in order to have the support of the opinion of an illustrious man, he had invited Volta to come and judge for himself. He did not receive his approbation.

Charles, the natural philosopher, celebrated for his improvement of aerostation, has often related to one of our friends, a very illustrious scholar, that he one day surprised Marat in the very act of quackery. Marat pretended he had discovered a resin that was a perfect conductor of electricity. Charles handled it and felt a needle concealed in the resin, which accounted for the whole mystery. Marat flew into a passion, and drew his sword. Charles seized it, broke it, and threw Marat down. This duel, which has been sometimes related in a different manner, was a fight with fists; and neither party was wounded.

The Revolution found Marat in the house of the Count d'Artois,† in the focus of abuses and prodigality, amidst young insolent noblemen, that is to say, in the very place where one could the best learn to know and detest the ancient system. He found himself, from the very first, and without any transition, hurried away into popular movement. He had just arrived from a journey from England when the explosion took place on the 14th of July. His imagination was seized by that unprecedented spectacle which filled his brain with a frenzy from which he never recovered. His vanity likewise had been flattered by an accident that caused him to perform a part on that glorious day. If we may believe a note that he sent to the journalists, three months after the 14th of July, Marat happening to be, that very day, in the crowd which

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\* If we relied on the continuator of Montucla (t. iii., p. 595), we might believe that Marat was ignorant, in optics, of what was known before Newton, of the best things that had been said by Descartes. But this continuator is Lalande, a man cruelly persecuted by Marat, and consequently to be suspected in his testimony concerning him. I have thought it my duty to inquire what the most illustrious natural philosophers of our age, quite disinterested in this old question of history, thought on this subject. They have assured me that, in fact, Marat had not well comprehended Newton's experiments, that he had judged them improperly by reproducing them in totally different circumstances, and that, of all Marat's experiments, only one deserved attention,—that of the rings of colour traced by the light diffused around the point of contact of a glass lens and a metal.

† Several persons, still living, believed that he belonged to M. de Calonne, and affirm that they have read counter-revolutionary pamphlets by Marat. However, in spite of every inquiry, I have been unable to discover any. Lafayette (*Mémoires*, ii., 286) assures us that "Two months before the Revolution, Marat had departed for London, howling against democracy."



thronged the Pont-Neuf, and a detachment of hussars having penetrated to that point, he became the spokesman of the crowd, and commanded the soldiers to lay down their arms, which they did not think proper to do. Nevertheless Marat modestly compares himself to Horatius Cocles, who alone, on a bridge, stopped an army.

Dissatisfied with the journalists who had not praised him worthily, Marat (as he assures us) sold the sheets of his bed in order to begin a journal. He tried several titles, and found one excellent: "*The Friend of the People*, or the Parisian publicist, a political and impartial journal." In spite of this style, occasionally burlesque, as we see, and always weak and declamatory, Marat was successful. The secret of his success was his assuming, not the habitual tone of the French pamphlets and journals, but of the gazettes which our refugee libelists made in England and Holland, in the style of Morand's *Gazétier cuirassé*, and other furious publications. Like them, Marat furnished all sorts of news, scandal, and personalities; he refrained from those abstract theories unintelligible to the people, which all the other journalists were simple enough to oblige them to read; he spoke but little of foreign affairs, and little of the departments which then entirely filled the journal of the Jacobins. He confined himself to Paris, to the movement in Paris, and especially to persons, whom he accused and denounced with the terrible levity of the libelists whom he imitated: with this great difference, however; Morand's scandal resulted only in the ransom of the persons denounced,—in putting money into Morand's pocket; whereas Marat's, more disinterested, sent people to death; many a one, named by him in the morning, might be assassinated in the evening.

One is surprised that this uniform violence, ever and ever the same,—this monotony of fury, which renders the reading of Marat's journal so fatiguing, had always an influence,—did not satiate the public. For there is no variety; everything is in the extreme and carried to an excess, the same words, *infamous*, *infernal*, *wretch*, ever recurring, with the everlasting chorus, *death!* and no other change than the number of the heads to be cut off, first 600, next 10,000, then again 20,000; in this manner he goes on, if I remember rightly, to the singularly precise number of 270,000 heads!

This very uniformity, which seemed likely to tire out and cloy, was serviceable to Marat. He had the effect and influence of the self-same bell tolling a knell for ever. Every morning, before day-break, the streets re-echoed with the shouts of the newspaper-carriers: "Here you have the Friend of the People!" Marat furnished every night eight octavo pages, which were sold the next morning; but every instant the paper is found to be too small, and fills to overflowing; often he adds eight pages more—sixteen pages for one number; yet even this is not sufficient for him; what he had begun in large type he frequently finished in small, in order to include more matter, more insults, and more fury. The other journalists produce their papers at intervals, and relieve one another, or obtain assistance; but Marat never. The *Friend of the People* is all written by the same hand; it is not simply a newspaper, but a man, a living individual.

How was he able to accomplish this enormous task? One word will

explain everything : he remained ever at his desk, going but very seldom to the Assembly and the clubs. His life was merely and entirely confined to writing, both day and night. The police likewise did him early the good service of forcing him to live concealed, shut up, and entirely devoted to work ; it doubled his activity, and, moreover, extremely interested the people in behalf of their friend, a persecuted fugitive, in peril, on their account. In reality, the danger was trifling. Lenoir and Sartine's old police was no more ; and the new one, ill-organised, uncertain, and timid, in the hands of Bailly and Lafayette, had no real influence. Save Favras and the murderer of François the baker, there had been no serious punishment either in '90 or '91. Lafayette himself, far from desiring the dictatorship, hastened to induce the Assembly to enforce the new procedure, which completely annulled the judiciary power. The salaried National Guard, which constituted his true power, was partly composed of the ancient French Guards and the conquerors of the Bastille, who regretted to perform the part of police officers.

Marat made much money by his journal, and lived in easy circumstances, from day to day, however, at the hazard of a wandering life. His fantastical dress bespoke his eccentricity ; although usually dirty, he would occasionally display a sudden carefulness, a partial luxury, and a sort of reminiscence of gallantry in his appearance : a white satin waistcoat, for instance, with a greasy collar and dirty linen. This return of good fortune, which usually appeases men, had no effect on him. His unwholesome, irritating, and imprisoned existence preserved his fury entire. He ever saw the world in the narrow and oblique daylight passing through an air-hole into his cellar, livid and gloomy, like those damp walls, or like his own face which seemed to be assuming their colour. This manner of living at length became agreeable to him ; and he enjoyed the fantastical and sinister effect with which it invested his name. He felt he reigned from the bottom of that dark pit ; there, he judged without appeal, the world of light, the kingdom of the living, saving one and condemning another. His judgments extended even to private affairs ; and those of women seemed to be specially entitled to his consideration. He protects a fugitive nun, and takes a lady's part in her quarrel with her husband, making atrocious threats against the latter.

An exceptional life, apart from the world, disabling man from controlling his judgments by those of other men, easily makes one a visionary. Marat was not far from believing himself gifted with second sight. He is ever predicting at random. By so doing, he singularly flattered the disposition of the public mind ; for their extreme misery had rendered them credulous and impatient of the future, and they listened with avidity to this Mathew Laensberg. Singular to relate, nobody perceives that he is mistaken every instant. This is nevertheless striking in what concerns foreign affairs : he has no suspicion of the concerted alliance of Europe against France (see August 28th, 1790, No. 204, and others). As for home affairs, seeing everything gloomy, he runs but little risk of making a mistake. Whenever a word of the prophet is fulfilled it is noticed by the people with admiration ; and even the journalists, little jealous of one whom they consider a madman of no consequence, fear not to exalt him rapturously, and term him Marat *the divine*. In reality, his excessive

distrust sometimes serves him for penetration. For instance, the day when Louis XVI. sanctioned the decree requiring the priests to take the oath, Marat appeals to him in powerful and sensible language. He reminds him of his education and his past domestic history, and then asks him by what sublime virtue he has deserved that God should grant him this miracle of euancipating himself from the past and becoming sincere.

These flashes of good sense are uncommon. Among the ventings of his fury, we more frequently discern fits of quackery, or delirious boastings which no one but a madman would venture to utter: "If I were a tribune of the people, and supported by a few thousand determined men, I warrant that, in six weeks, *the constitution should be perfect*; that the political machine should go on bravely; that no public rogue should venture to derange it; that the nation should be free and happy; that in less than a year it should be flourishing and formidable, and should remain so as long as I live." (July 26th, 1790, No. 173.)

What, in my opinion, does Marat greater wrong than all his furious language, is that he is not so much a madman or a monomaniac, but he remembers wonderfully well his personal enemies, even people of whom he had to complain but in a very indireet manner. Neither can it be said that they were such dangerous persons that he was obliged to silence his generosity and make an effort to proscribe them, though they were his enemies: they were inoffensive persons, and, although occupying an honourable position in the world, without any political importance.

If he wished to merit the grand name of *Friend of the People*, and render sacred the terrible character of national accuser that he had assumed, it was necessary first to be pure and disinterested. To be so from money is not sufficient; it is necessary to be also *pure from hatred*. He ought to have commenced a noble and entirely new life, to have forgotten that there had been formerly a Doctor Marat, an author ill or well-judged, in open war with the scientific men of the period.

The Academy of Sciences, guilty of having disdained what he names his discoveries, is persecuted and denounced by his newspaper,—and in a pamphlet reprinted expressly,—as aristocratical. Peaceful men, like Laplace and Lalande, and Monge, a true patriot and a man of great character, are denounced to the vengeance of the people. He accuses them not only of want of patriotism, but of robbery. "The money given to the Academy for making experiments, is squandered away by them," says he, "at La Rapée or among harlots."

The principal object of this envious rage is naturally the first man of the day, he who had just effected in science a revolution which vied with the political revolution, he whom Laplace and Lagrange owned for their superior—I mean Lavoisier. It is well known that Lagrange was so struck with the grand aspect of the chemical world which had just been unveiled by Lavoisier, that, for ten years, he laid aside mathematics, unable any longer to support the dry study of abstract calculation, when he beheld the profound secrets of nature displayed before him.

This great revolutionist, Lavoisier, would not have been able to make his revolution, had he not been rich. It was for this purpose that he had desired to be a farmer of the public revenue. Far from assuming

in this capacity a fiscal spirit, he advised the lowering of several imposts, maintaining that the revenue, far from diminishing, would increase. When appointed by Turgot director of the powder-magazines,\* he abolished the vexatary custom of searching the cellars in quest of saltpetre. One fact will enable us to appreciate the goodness of his heart. Amidst his numerous labours and different functions, he found time to devote himself to a long, laborious, and disgusting research, the study of the gas which escapes from water-closets, without any other hope than that of saving the lives of a few unfortunate creatures.†

Such was the man whom Marat attacked, whom he calls "a chemical apprentice, with an income of one hundred thousand francs a year." His persevering accusations, reiterated in several ways, prepare the scaffold for Lavoisier. The latter, who plainly perceives that having done so much, and so much to do, his life is of inestimable value to the world, never thinks of flying. He could never guess the fatal stupidity that could deprive science and mankind of so precious a life. And yet hatred, fomented by Marat, increases. He had been unable to annihilate Newton; so, to console himself, he is determined to destroy the Newton of chemistry.‡

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\* Lavoisier, far more known than the other farmers of the revenue, had to undergo alone the whole of the too natural animosity of the people against that body, so fatal to the State. He had taken the principal part in a measure necessary for the salubrity of Paris, which then occupied the minds and excited the imaginations of men, the removal by night of the bodies that had been heaped together for so many ages in the cemetery of the Innocents. They also attributed to him, without any proof, the plan of the new wall with which the *Ferme-Générale* surrounded Paris. Marat reproaches him with having wanted, by that wall, "to deprive the city of air," and stifle it. He also accuses him with having transported the gunpowder from the arsenal to the Bastille on the night of the 12th of July. Now, I believe, the transport took place sooner, (for the Bastille was put in a state of defence as early as the 30th of June), and by order of the minister, to which the director of the gunpowder was unable to offer any opposition.

† Whilst writing this, I am reading a very important pamphlet on a class of workmen, perhaps still more unfortunate, the stone quarry-men, who all die of consumption before the age of forty. I intreat our young scientific men, who go to visit the rocks of Fontainebleau, to visit also the men, and to seek a means of rendering this employment less fatal. The work of which I am speaking (*Les Carriers de Fontainebleau, par M. V. de Maud'huy, 1846.*) may appear absurd in form; but the matter is very curious. And even the form, so strange, fantastical, and barbarous, as to remind one of the energy of the bad authors of the sixteenth century,—or rather the wild chaos of rocks and flint heaped up together,—even this form deserves our attention. We laugh at first with surprise, but afterwards we feel the latent heat,—the heat without light: but light will come, sooner or later, to a man who is so worthy of it by his charity.

‡ No one will hesitate to give him this name, on reading his biography by Cuvier, (*Biographie Universelle*), and by M. Dumas (*Philosophie Chimique*). M. Dumas has shown, in the clearest manner, the perfect originality of



Nobody must believe that the murderous advice given by Marat were mere words and wishes ; they are too often *realities*,—immediate executions. Thus, in his number 313 (December 17th, 1790), a letter addressed to him, informs us that, of those whom he had denounced to death, *four have just been assassinated*.

His only sorrow is that the same method is not yet followed with respect to the National Assembly. On the 21st of October, 1790, he assures us that if a few heads were promenaded from time to time around the Assembly, the constitution would soon be made, and made perfect. It would be still better, in his opinion, if such heads were chosen among the members of the Assembly itself. On the 22nd of September, the 15th of November, and on other occasions, he earnestly entreats the people to *fill their pockets with flint-stones*, and to stone the faithless deputies to death in their hall.\* On the 24th of November, he insists that *his dear comrades should run to the Assembly every time Marat, their incorruptible friend, gave them notice*.

In the month of August, 1790, when Marat and Camille Desmoulins were accused by Malouet in the National Assembly, Camille, soon safe out of the affair, went to find Marat, and recommended him to disavow a few horribly sanguinary words that did harm to the cause. On the morrow, Marat related the whole in his newspaper, deriding Desmoulins; and far from avowing that his extreme language was prompted by enthusiasm, he declares that they seem to him dictated by humanity ; that it is humane to shed a little blood in order to avoid greater bloodshed at a later period, &c.

He reproaches Camille Desmoulins with fear ; and yet the latter had given a proof of great audacity. Seated in a gallery, listening to his accuser, he replied aloud to Malouet's words, " Would he dare deny it ? " by " I dare." The chances were not even between him, ever in broad daylight, and Marat ever hid. The latter only showed himself on uncommon occasions, when, the general grand meeting of the fanatics being convoked, he felt himself surrounded by an impenetrable wall, and safer than in his cellar. In January, 1791, Marat was preaching the massacre of the salaried National Guards, and recommending Lafayette himself to the women, saying : " Make an Abelard of him." One of Lafayette's party who composed the *Journal des Halles*, was so bold as to summon

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Lavoisier, who was so little indebted to Priestly and Cavendish, and still less to others, who have been benevolently made partakers of this great Revolution, but who have been merely its continuators and nomenclators

\* In a witty letter, in which the author is evidently bantering Marat, praise is given to the simple and economical project that he proposes, to render useless the greater part of the expenses required for the national defence, and to improve the constitution, &c., "*to let loose people with woollen caps and a few bits of rope*," to strangle the ministers and faithless deputies. But, if by mistake these woollen-cap men should go and strangle their leader?—To which Marat replies seriously, without perceiving the joke, that their tact is far too sure for any mistake to be possible : besides which, it is not necessary that there should be any leader or any organisation, &c. (No. 261, October 25th, 1790.)

him before the tribunals. He emerged from the regions of darkness, went to the tribunal (*Palais*), and appeared as defendant. This but seemed to scare the light of day by his appearance. He had not much reason to fear ; for he was surrounded by an army. The auditory was composed of his furious partisans ; and all the avenues and passages were filled to overflowing with an extremely excited multitude. For justice to have its course, it would have been necessary to fight a regular battle, and there would have been a massacre. The authorities were even afraid they should not be able to protect the life of the plaintiff ; so they prevented him from appearing. Marat, thus triumphant, without a struggle, was found to have demonstrated the impotency of the tribunals, the police, the National Guard, and of Bailly and Lafayette.

From that day he was, without dispute, the king of public information. His most frantic transports were held sacred ; and his sanguinary prating, mingled too often with perfidious reports, which he copied without judgment, was accepted as an oracle. Now, he may hurry forward into every kind of absurdity ; for the more he becomes mad, the more he is believed. He is the titled mad prophet of the people, who laugh at him, listen to him, adore him, and believe in him alone.

Now, he walks with a proud, disdainful, happy look—smiling in his greatest fury. What he has pursued throughout his life, he now possesses ; everybody looks at him, speaks of him, and is afraid of him. The reality surpasses whatever he had been able to imagine or wish for in the dreams of his most delirious vanity. Yesterday, he was a great citizen ; to-day, he is a *seer*, a prophet ; let him only become a little more mad, and he will pass for God.

He goes on, and all the rival journals, hastening to tread in his footsteps, follow him blindly into the path of terror.

The press then possessed men of sound mind, who were bold, but of a superior stamp, humane, and truly patriotic. Why did they follow Marat ?

In the extremely critical position in which France then was, being neither at peace nor at war, and having in her heart that hostile royalty, that immense conspiracy of priests and nobles, and the public authority being precisely in the hands of those against whom it was to be directed, what power remained for France ? No other, it would seem, at the first glance, than popular intimidation. But this intimidation had a dreadful result : by paralysing the hostile power, and removing the present momentary obstacle, it would go on always creating an obstacle which would increase and necessitate the employment of a new degree of Terror.

The obstacle that it created, and which, oppressing us on all sides, almost annihilated us, is that sentiment which, from being at first petty, feeble, and plaintive, increases and grows stronger, till it becomes immense, gigantic,—a sanguinary phantom, terrible against terror . . . the phantom of Pity !

It would have required a general combination of all the energies of the time, such as could hardly be expected from a generation so ill-prepared, to organise a truly active national power, a formidable but upright system of justice, to be strong without the aid of terror, and to prevent consequently the reaction of pity, which has destroyed the Revolution.



The predominant men of the period differed at the outset, far less than is generally believed ; but the progress of the struggle widened the breach between them, and increased the opposition. In the beginning, each of them would have had but few ideas to sacrifice in order to be of the same mind as the others. What they had especially to sacrifice, without ever being able to do so, was the sad passions which the old system had deeply implanted in their hearts : in these, the love of pleasure and money ; in those bitterness and hatred.

We repeat, that the greatest obstacle was much rather passion than the opposition of ideas. And what was wanting in these men, so eminent in other respects, was sacrifice,—the sacrifice of passion.

Affection, if I may so express myself, though conspicuous in many among them,—affection and love for the people were not yet sufficiently great.

This is what, by keeping them isolated, disunited, and weak, obliged them all, in danger, to seek a factitious power in exaggeration and violence ; this is what placed all the club orators and newspaper editors in the train of one who, being more disordered in mind, was able to be sanguinary without hesitation or remorse ; this is what brought the whole of the press under the yoke of Marat.

Personal causes, often very petty and miserably human, contributed to render all those men violent. Let us now blush to mention them.

The extreme uncertainty in which the most powerful and perhaps the most penetrating genius of the whole Revolution (I mean Danton) was then plunged, and his fluctuating conduct between the two parties which, as it was said, caused him to receive bribes from several quarters, could be disguised only by violent language.

His brilliant friend, Camille Desmoulins, the greatest writer of the time, more pure from bribery, but of a weaker character, is like a capricious artist. Marat's rivalry and permanent fury, which nobody can equal, occasionally provokes Camille into violent expressions and an emulation of anger very foreign to his nature.

How would Prud'homme, the printer, after losing Loustalot, be able to support his paper, *Les Révolutions de Paris* ? Only by becoming more violent.

And how can Fréron, the orator of the people, the intimate friend of Camille Desmoulins and Lucile, who lives in the same house with them, who loves Lucile and envies Camille,—how can he hope to outshine the eloquent and amusing Desmoulins ? By talent ? No, but by audacity, perhaps. Therefore, he will become more violent.

But there is one now beginning who will soon surpass them all. Hebert, a ranting actor, has the happy idea to collect into one newspaper all the vile expressions, foul language, and oaths scattered throughout the other journals. The task is easy. The carriers shout : " The furious indignation of *Père Duchêne* ! Our *Père Duchêne* is furiously angry this morning ! " The secret of all this eloquence was the addition of a coarse phrase at every third word.

Poor Marat, what will you do against this formidable rival ? Truly, your fury is now insipid ; it is not, like Hebert's, seasoned with vile expressions : you look rather aristocratical. You must now try to swear

also (January 16th, 1791); for it is not without extraordinary and incessant efforts of fury and outrage that you can hold your high position.

This mutual impulse towards violence is a feature of the time which deserves observation. We shall understand this the better, by following attentively the dates; it is the only way to observe the movement that urges them forward, as if a prize had been proposed for the most violent, —to follow this deadly race from club to club, and from journal to journal. Therein, every outcry finds an echo; and fury impels fury. One article produces another ever more violent. Woe to the hindermost! Marat has almost always the start of the others; sometimes, however, Fréron, his imitator, will surpass him; and Prud'homme, though more moderate, has nevertheless some furious articles. Then Marat rushes after them. Thus, in December, 1790, when Prud'homme proposed to organise a battalion of Scævolas against the Tarquins,—a troop of king slayers, Marat becomes enraged and vents a thousand sanguinary expressions.

This *crescendo* in violence is not a phenomenon peculiar to the newspapers, which, in general, do but express and reproduce the violence of the clubs. What was ranted forth in the evening, was hastily printed at night, and sold in the morning. The journalists of the royal party vent in like manner the bitter insulting and ironical expressions which they collect in the aristocratical saloons in the evening; the assemblies in the *Pavillon de Flore*, in the saloons of Madame de Lamballe, and those which are held in the houses of the great lords on the point of emigrating, furnish the press with weapons quite as plentifully as the clubs.

The emulation between the two hostile presses is terrible. It confounds one to behold those millions of newspapers flying about in a whirlwind of fury, opposing, and thwarting one another. The revolutionary press, furious in itself, is moreover provoked by the bitter irony of the royalist papers and pamphlets. The latter are multiplied *ad infinitum*, dipping at pleasure into the twenty-five annual millions of the civil list. Montmorin confessed to Alexandre de Lameth that he had, in a short space of time, employed seven millions in buying up some of the Jacobins, and in bribing the writers and orators. But the sums that were spent on the royalist newspapers, the *Ami du Roi*, the *Actes des Apôtres*, and others, will never be known any more than what sum the Duke of Orleans may have spent in fomenting riots.

A disgusting savage struggle,—maintained by flint-stones and five-franc pieces! One party stoned to death, and the other branded with corruption! Souls bartered on one side, and terror on the other!

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FIRST STEP OF TERROR.—MIRABEAU'S OPPOSITION.

To understand how the most civilised nation in the world, on the morrow of the Confederation, when all hearts seemed naturally to be full of brotherly emotion, could euter so suddenly into the path of violence, it

would be necessary to fathom an unknown ocean,—that of the sufferings of the people.

We have noted the exterior,—the newspapers, and lower than the newspapers, the clubs. But beneath this noisy surface is the unfathomable, mute abyss, an infinitude of suffering, an increasing suffering, aggravated morally by the bitterness of so much hope deceived, and materially by the sudden disappearance of every kind of resource.

The first result of the acts of violence was to cause the departure not only of the nobles, but of many rich people and others in easy circumstances, by no means hostile to the Revolution, but scared away by fear. Such as remained durst neither stir, speculate, sell, buy, fabricate, nor spend. People, being alarmed, kept their money in their purse ; and every kind of speculation and work suddenly stopped.

It was most strange to behold the Revolution opening a career for the peasants and closing it against the workmen. The former listened with delight to the decrees that put up the ecclesiastical estates for sale. The latter, silent and melancholy, and out of work, lounged about with folded arms all day long, listening to the conversations of animated groups of people, and thronging the clubs, the galleries and passages of the Assembly. Every riot, whether paid or not, found in the street an army of workmen infuriated by misery, labourers worn out by despair and inactivity, too happy to find any occupation, for at least one day.

In such a position of things, the responsibility of the great political society, the Jacobins, was truly immense. What part was it to play ? Only one ; to remain firm even against its own passions, to enlighten public opinion, to avoid the brutal system of terror which was about to raise up innumerable enemies against the Revolution, but, at the same time, to watch the counter-revolutionists so closely, that on the very first really just opportunity, it might be able to chastise them.

But, so far from doing so, it powerfully assisted them by its own awkwardness. It caused their party to multiply, and strengthened them by persecution and by advancing their interests. It was the means of propagating their cause in the most active and energetic manner. By annihilating them in Paris, it extended them in France and throughout Europe ; it destroyed a few hundreds, but it gave birth to millions of others.

The Jacobins seem to conduct themselves as the immediate heirs of the priests : they imitate the vexatious intolerance by which the clergy has occasioned so many heresies ; and they boldly follow the old dogma : “ Out of our community, no salvation.” Excepting the Cordeliers, whom they treat gently, speaking of them as little as possible ; they persecute the clubs, even those of a revolutionary character. The club called the *Cercle Social*, for instance, a free-masonic meeting,—which could hardly be reproached with anything but ridicule,—politically timid, but socially much more enlightened than the Jacobins, is severely attacked by them. Lacroix, the agent of the Orleans party, who, as we have seen, published the correspondence of the Jacobins, denounced the *Cercle Social*, both in his journal and at the club. Chabroud, the Jacobin, who had been appointed president of the *Cercle* the very preceding evening durst not defend it. Camille Desmoulins ventured to do so, but was stopped short,

at the very first words, by the unanimous disapprobation of the Jacobins. He took his revenge on the morrow by writing his admirable number 54, an immortal manifesto of political tolerance.

A still more violent attack was made by the Jacobins against the club of the *Friends of the Monarchical Constitution*, by which the constitutional party were attempting to renew their *Club des Impartiaux*. These men, for the most part distinguished characters (Clermout-Tonniere, Malouet, Fontanes, and others), were, it is true, suspected, less for their doctrines than for the dangerous organisation of their club. Far different from the *Club of 89* (composed of Mirabeau, Sicys, Lafayette, and others), full in number, and not active, the *Monarchical Club* admitted workmen, and distributed bread-tickets; these tickets were not given to beggars, but to hard-working men; neither was the bread given altogether gratuitously. This was a very strong basis for the influence of this club; nor was there any means of preventing it. These *Monarchical members* were acting legally: they had demanded and obtained from the town the necessary authorisation which could not be refused; as several decrees, among others a recent one of the 30th of November, solicited by the Jacobins themselves, for the interest of their provincial societies, recognised the right of citizens meeting to confer on public affairs, much more the right of societies corresponding together. In spite of this, the Jacobins did not hesitate to pursue the Monarchists from street to street, and from house to house, intimidating by their threats the proprietors of the rooms where they held their meetings. The municipal authorities were weak enough to grant the Jacobins an order which suspended the meeting of the members of the Monarchical Club; but the latter having protested against this extremely illegal act, they durst not maintain their prohibition. Then the Jacobins had recourse to more unworthy means, —to atrocious calumny. There had been, just before, a sanguinary collision between the paid *chasseurs* and the people of La Villette, who were accused of smuggling; so a report was spread in Paris that the members of the Monarchical Club had paid these soldiers to assassinate the people. Barnave vented against them from the national tribune the cruelly equivocal words “that they were distributing *poisonous* bread to the people.” They were not allowed to protest, or to ask for any explanation of this language; so they applied to the tribunals; but then, arming hired or infuriated people against them, the Jacobins settled the matter with sticks and stone; and the wounded parties, far from being pitied, were in great danger; for it was impudently asserted and rumoured among the people that they wore white cockades.

Amid this brutal struggle, the Jacobins proclaimed a principle which had been their own from the very beginning, but which they had never avowed. They swore, on the 24th of January, “to defend with their fortunes and lives whosoever should denounce the conspirators.”

All this would lead one to suppose that the society possessed even at that time the inveterate fanaticism of which it later gave proofs. Should any one think so, he would be mistaken.

It is true that the society had acquired many enthusiastic men, who afterwards attached themselves to Robespierre; but the majority still belonged to two very different elements:—



1st. To the Primitive founders,—the party of Duport, Barnave, and Lameth. These endeavoured to maintain themselves, in presence of the new comers, by a display of violence and fanaticism ; and, sad to relate, they differed from the Monarchical Club, which they persecuted, only in a want of candour ; but the more they perceived a similarity between the two parties, the more they declaimed against them. We may judge of the extremity to which unjust violence may be carried, by the equivocally murderous expression that fell from Barnave about the *poisonous bread*.

2ndly. An element still less pure of the Jacobin's Club was the Orleans party. We have seen Laeos' attack against the *Cercle Social*, and the shameless trick by which popularity was sought for in a display of hypocritical fury. The Orleans party had just received a very serious blow, from which they much needed to recover. And by whom was that blow given ? Strange to say, by the Duke of Orleans, who was himself destroying his own party.

Let us go back a little ; for the subject is important enough to deserve an explanation.

The Orleans partisans believed themselves on the point of realising their projects. The majority of the journalists, whether bribed or not, were working on their side ; by Laeos they influenced the journal of the Jacobins ; at the club of the Cordeliers, Danton and Desmoulins were favourably disposed towards them ; and so was even Marat, on almost every occasion. The head of the house of Orleans, was, it is true, an unworthy character ; but the children, and also the ladies, Madame de Genlis and Madame de Montesson, were frequently mentioned with praise. The Duke de Chartres\* was a pleasing person, and gained a great number of friends. Desmoulins assures us that this prince treated him "as a brother."

This young man had been received member of the Jacobin Club, with more noise and ceremony than his age would have led people to expect. It was like a day of rejoicing. Care had been taken to publish in the most advantageous light the amiable qualities of this pupil of Madame de Genlis. Desmoulins headed one of his Numbers with an interesting engraving, representing the youthful prince in the hospital (Hôtel-Dieu) bleeding a patient in bed.

The Orleanists were going on prosperously, had it not been for the Duke of Orleans. In vain did his party strive to make him ambitious ; avarice was his ruling passion, which caused him to undo on the one hand what his friends were doing for him on the other. The first use he made of his reviving popularity, was to extort from the committee of finances a promise to pay him the capital of a sum of which his family had received the interest ever since the time of the Regent. This Regent, who is represented only as a prodigal, most assuredly deserved this name ; but what is less known, was his avidity. Wishing, without paying anything himself, to induce the Duke of Modena to marry his daughter (who was in great disrepute) this prince applied to the king, his

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\* Afterwards Louis-Philippe, ex-king of the French.—C. C.

ward, and made this little boy, only eleven years of age and dependent on him, sign a dowry of four millions to be paid out of the royal Treasury.

The Treasury was empty; and in the deplorable distress caused by a bankruptcy of three millions, and by Law's system, it was able to pay only the interest. Yet now, at the end of seventy years, in a most miserable period, and in the extreme winter of 1791, the Duke of Orleans lays claim to the capital; and this without any kind of right; for the dowry had been given to the daughter only, on the condition that she should renounce all her rights in favour of her eldest brother and his descendants. Now the Duke of Orleans was one of those descendants, those representatives of the eldest brother in whose favour the renunciation had been made. How could he at the same time make himself the representative of her who had renounced?

The reporter of the affair was the irreproachable, austere, and inflexible Camus, the Jansenist, who was accustomed every day to cancel and postpone paltry petty pensions of three or four hundred francs; what means were employed with such a man to render him tame and easy, or how powerfully and pressingly he must have been courted, can only be guessed. Did they make him believe that it was the only natural means of paying back to the prince the sums he had generously spent in the service of freedom? . . . However this may be, Camus proposed to pay! and to pay immediately, in the course of the year, by four instalments.

Luckily, the press was extremely indignant. Brissot, although formerly an *employé* in the establishment of the Duke of Orleans, nevertheless gave the alarm; and Desmoulins, although he called himself the prince's friend and *brother*, branded this shameful affair in two or three terrible sentences, consenting, said he, that the Duke of Orleans should be recompensed, "but without employing vile means to misdirect money of the citizens, and *exhaust the public treasury in the underhand manoeuvres of a committee.*" He disowned the flattering engraving, and imputed it to his editor.

This large sum thus escaped the greedy clutches of the party of the Duke of Orleans. What remained, was a considerable diminution of their credit, their patron in disrepute for a long time, and a very serious prejudice created against the kingly power, however citizen-like it might be. A vast number of revolutionists, friendly to the royal party, favourably disposed towards the monarchical institution, and prejudiced in favour of the English routine of calling the younger branches to the throne, were *unroyalised*.

Robespierre is wrong in saying, "The republic slipped in between the parties without anybody knowing how." We know very well the way by which it entered into this extremely monarchical country, so passionately fond of kings. History had done nothing towards it; in vain had Camille Desmoulins proved, in his admirable pamphlet of *La France libre*, in July, 1789, that, from reign to reign, the ancient monarchy had scarcely ever performed what the blind devotion of the people had expected from it; he spoke to the wind. His objection did not seem to apply to the new ideal of democratical royalty which many people had imagined. But this ideal was annihilated by royalty in embryo: for its



candidate led people to believe that with him the public treasury would be an empty cash-box.

The principal founder of the republic was the Duke of Orleans.

The republican idea first started by Camille Desmoulins was taken up by Robert, also a member of the Cordeliers. He again laid down the idea of a Republic as the only one that could confer a powerful candid simplicity to the Revolution ; and he published his pamphlet " Republicanism adapted to France." This question was gradually adopted by Brissot as the predominant one in the state of affairs. It was a question of principle, and not of form, as is still too frequently alleged. No social amelioration was possible, unless the political question was distinctly laid down. Robespierre and Marat, following in this, it is true, the idea of the majority, wrongly supposed that they might postpone this question, or make it a secondary consideration : such a question could not be solved after others. To continue the movement with such an incumbrance as a captive hostile royalty, still powerful enough to do harm,—to make the Revolution march forward with such a terrible thorn in the foot, was most assuredly the way to injure, pervert, cripple, and probably annihilate it.

Laclos, the Orleanist editor of the journal of the Jacobins, did not fail to show himself the advocate of royalty ; and even the Club expressly declared itself in favour of the monarchical institution ; for, on the 25th of January, a deputy of a section having uttered the word *republicans*, several exclaimed, " We are not *republicans* ;" and the Assembly engage the speaker to withdraw the word.

Of the three factions of the Jacobins which may be designated by three names, Lameth, Laclos, and Robespierre, the two former were decidedly royalists, and the third by no means averse to the idea of royalty.

Thus the brutal warfare of the Jacobins against the members of the Monarchical Club, that contempt of order and the law, that foretaste of terror which would never have been excused in fanatics,—all this was applied by politicians, the leaders of the Jacobin majority, who sought in it a remedy for their declining popularity. In reality, they were royalists ill-treating royalists.

The Jacobin inquisition found itself, in fact, in rather unsafe hands : its journal of delation being in those of Laclos, the Orleans agent, and its committee of intrigues and riots under the direction of the Lameth triumvirate.

An inquisition without a religion ! Without any precise faith ! An inquisition exercised by men the more restless and keen in proportion as they are themselves more suspected.

This power, although ill-founded, ill-authorized, and badly-exercised, had nevertheless an immense influence, for it acted in the name of a society considered as the very focus of patriotism and the Revolution, and by all the multiplied powers of the provincial societies, so docile and fervent, and generally unacquainted with the focus of intrigues which sent them its orders.

But yesterday the Revolution was a religion ; it now becomes a system of police.

And what is this police about to become ? O unexpected change ! A

machine for making aristocrats and multiplying the partisans of the counter-revolution. It is about to bestow on the latter all the weak minded and the lukewarm (a vast multitude !), all the ignorant and compassionate good-hearted people, &c.

A great number of inoffensive men, who, without having any determined ideas, were inclined towards the old system by habit or position, found themselves, in consequence of the Jacobin delations, in an insufferable situation, bordering on despair. What could they do ? Deny the opinions with which they were reproached ? But nobody would have believed them ; they would have gained nothing by it but disgrace. It was difficult to remain, and as difficult to depart. For the man who found himself under this sort of political excommunication, to remain was torture ; the poor unfortunate aristocrat (thus baptised, whether justly or unjustly,) was watched, at every step, with terrible suspicion ; the crowd, and even little children, would follow the enemy of the people. He returned home ; but his house was not very safe ; his servants were enemies ; till at length, his fear ever increasing, he found means one day to run away. Now this man, who would have remained neuter, weak, or indifferent, if he had been unmolested, was cast into the enemy's camp, and if he did not wound us with the sword, he certainly did with the tongue,—with his complaints and accusations, or, at least, with the sight of his misery and the pity he inspired.

That terrible enemy, pity, was increasing against us, throughout Europe, the hatred conceived against France and the Revolution : a hatred, in reality, unjust. The Jacobin inquisition was by no means in the hands of the people. Those who were then organising it, were spurious Jacobins, sprung from the ancient system, nobles or bourgeois, unprincipled politicians of an inconsistent and giddy Machiavelism. They urged on and turned the people to their own advantage : a thing easy enough in the state of distrustful and credulous irritability into which they were cast by extreme misery.

This situation displayed itself with excessive violence, when the princesses (Mesdames), the king's aunts, wanted to emigrate (at the end of February). The difficulty of continuing their religious worship and keeping priests of their own choice, and the imminent ordeal of Easter, alarmed those timid women. The king himself recommended them to depart for Rome : and there was no law to prevent it. The king, as first magistrate, was obliged by duty to remain or to abdicate ; but certainly his aunts were by no means bound to do so. It was not much to be feared that these old women would considerably recruit and strengthen the troops of the emigrants. It would doubtless have been more noble for them to have determined to share their brother's fate, and the miseries and dangers of France. But, in short, they wanted to depart ; it was necessary, therefore, to let them go, both them and all who, thinking only of real or imaginary dangers, preferred their safety and their lives to their native land,—those who were able to abandon their quality of Frenchmen. It was necessary to throw open every gate, and, if they were not wide enough, to throw down the walls for them.

The people were very justly alarmed at the possibility of the king's flight, and confounded these two very different questions.

Mirabeau was informed of the approaching departure of the princesses, comprehended the rumour, and the danger that would follow. He entreated the king, but in vain, not to allow it. Paris became alarmed, and addressed the same prayer to the king and to the National Assembly. This was a new alarm for Monsieur, who, it was said, wished to depart, and gave his word not to abandon his brother; whereby he engaged himself but little, being in fact resolved to escape with Louis XVI.

This fermentation, far from stopping the princesses, hastened their departure. The expected explosion did not fail to take place. Marat, Desmoulins, and the whole of the press, raised an outcry that they were carrying away millions of francs and smuggling away the Dauphin, and that they started before the king in order to prepare his future household. It was not difficult to divine that they would have some trouble on the way. They were first stopped at Moret; but their escort forced its way in spite of opposition; next, they were arrested at Arnay-le-Due; and there it was impossible to go forward. They write, and the king also writes, for the Assembly to authorise them to continue their journey.

This business, serious in itself, has been far more so, inasmuch as it was a solemn field of battle, where two principles and two spirits met and struggled together; one, the original and natural principle which had produced the Revolution, namely, *justice and equitable humanity*,—and the other, the principle of expedients and interest, which was called the *public safety*, and which ruined France: ruined her, inasmuch as casting her into a *crescendo* of assassination, which could not be stopped, it made France execrable throughout Europe, and inspired everlasting hatred against her; ruined her, inasmuch as the minds of men, being dejected, after the Reign of Terror, from disgust and remorse, rushed blindly to the yoke of military despotism; and ruined her, inasmuch as this glorious tyranny ended in placing her enemies in Paris, and her chief at Saint Helena.

Ten years of public safety, by the hand of the republicans; and fifteen years of public safety, by the sword of the emperor . . . Open the book of the debt, you are still paying at the present day for the ransom of France. The territory was redeemed; but the souls of men still remain unredeemed. I see them still serfs, the slaves of eupidity and base passions, preserving of this sanguinary history only the adoration of strength and victory,—of strength that was weak, and of victory vanquished.

What has not been vanquished, is the principle of the Revolution, disinterested justice, equity in spite of everything, and to this we must return. One lesson is enough.

The advocates of public *interest*, and the *safety* of the people, ought at least to have asked them whether they wished to be saved. It is true that the individual wishes, before everything else, to live; but the mass is susceptible of much higher sentiments. What would those saviours have said, if the people had replied: "I wish to perish and remain just."

And the man who said this was the one who did not perish. Mirabeau was in this matter the very organ of the people, the voice of the Revolu-

tion; and this is, among all his faults, his imperishable title: on this occasion, he defended equity.

It was the spurious Jacobins, Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, who laid down, against justice, the right of interest and safety,—a murderous weapon, a sword without a hilt, by which they perished themselves.

But why did they defend this right of *interest*? However sincere they may be supposed, we must nevertheless remark that they were interested in it. It was the time when the Lameths had just exposed themselves once more by a very serious mistake. Whilst the two elder, Alexandre and Charles Lameth, occupied at Paris the extreme point of the left side (of the Assembly) the van of the vanguard, their brother, Theodore, was organising, at Lons-le-Saulnier, a retrograde society. Through the credit of his brothers, he had acquired for it the affiliation of the Jacobins, and had caused it to be withdrawn from the primitive society of the same town, composed of energetic patriots. The latter inserted in Brissot's journal a fulminating address against the Lameths (February 2nd). Brissot supported this address, and notwithstanding all the efforts of the Lameths, the Jacobins being undeceived, deprived the retrograde society of the affiliation, and restored it to the other.

This was a terrible blow, one that might prove fatal to their popularity, and which explains why they showed themselves violent, hard-hearted, petulant, and impatient, in the discussion relating to the right of emigrating. It was necessary for them to make a display of zeal before the galleries. They behaved furiously on their benches, shouting and stamping; and they maintained with Barnave that the commune that had arrested the princesses was not guilty of illegality, *because it believed it was acting for the public interest*. Mirabeau having inquired what law forbade their journey, the Lameths made no answer; but one of their friends, more candid, replied: "The safety of the people."

The Assembly nevertheless permitted the princesses to continue their journey; and charged its constitutional committee to lay before it a plan of a law on emigration.

This project, much relished by Merlin, the future framer of the *Law against suspected persons*, was indeed already like a first article of the code of Terror; and it was copied from the other system of Terror, the *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*.

The barbarous legislation of Louis XIV., the model of the present, begins in like manner by inflicting confiscation on the emigrant; next, from one penalty to another, ever more harsh and absurd, it goes so far as to pronounce the sentence of the galleys against pity and humanity, against the charitable man who has saved the proscribed.

Therefore, the question was to know whether they were to take the first step in the path of Louis XIV., the path of Terror; whether France, free but yesterday, was to be shut up like a dungeon. A discussion that interested freedom to such a degree, required one thing especially,—that the Assembly should be calm and free. But, since the morning, there was every appearance of a riot, which was being excited by two different parties,—the friends of Marat, and the aristocrats. Marat, in his newspaper of the day, called upon the people to run to the Assembly, and display their opinion loudly and violently, and to *drive away the*

*faithless deputies.* On the other hand, the royalists, by cleverly agitating the *Faubourg Saint Antoine* (it is to them that Lafayette attributes this movement), had urged the people towards Vincennes by making them believe that a new Bastille was there being prepared. This was an infallible means of causing Lafayette and the National Guard to march out of Paris. Many nobles, summoned from the provinces several days previously, had entered the Tuileries stealthily, one by one, armed with daggers, swords, and pistols; and according to every probability, they reckoned on carrying off the king. The National Guard, returning from Vincennes, in the evening, and being in bad humour, found them in the Tuileries, disarmed, and ill-treated them.

That morning, the Assembly was deliberating, amid these commotions of which it could not well understand either the authors or the intention. It heard the drummers beating the *générale* throughout Paris, the sound of the drums approaching or retreating in the Rue Saint-Honore, the noise of the people crowding the galleries to suffocation, and scarcely containing themselves, and the still more formidable roar of the tumultuous crowd thronging about the doors. It was a time of agitation, emotion, and universal fever,—a vast and general murmur within and without.

Evidently a great battle was about to take place between two parties, nay more, two systems, two kinds of morality; and it was curious to know who would be willing to compromise himself and enter the arena.

Robespierre at once retired as far as possible, uttered a sentence, and no more,—spoke in order not to speak again. Chapelier, the reporter, having himself declared that his projected law was unconstitutional and demanded that the Assembly should previously decide whether it wished to have a law, Robespierre said: "I am not more a partisan of the law on emigration than M. Chapelier; but it is by a solemn discussion that you ought to recognise the impossibility or the dangers of such a law." So saying, he remained a silent witness of this debate; for whether Mirabeau compromised himself by it, or Mirabeau's enemies (Duport and Lameth), Robespierre would in either case reap advantage.

All, both his friends and his enemies, desired that Mirabeau should speak for his glory or for his ruin. In six notes that he received, one after the other, in rapid succession, he was called upon to declare his principles, and at the same time he was reminded of the violent state of Paris. He perfectly understood the appeal made to his courage; and, to avoid all suspense, he read a powerful address which he had written eight years before to the King of Prussia on the liberty of emigrating. He demanded, moreover, that the Assembly should declare that it *would not listen* to the project, and pass on to the order of the day.

No answer was returned, neither by Duport, the Lameths, nor Barnave. They remained profoundly silent, leaving the question to inferior speakers, such as Rewbell, Prieur, and Muguet. Rewbell held that in time of war emigrating was deserting. Now, this was precisely the knotty point of the situation: Was it a time of war? The answer might be affirmative or negative. As long as a state of war is not declared, the laws of peace subsist, and all men have the liberty of entering or leaving the country.



The projected law was read. It intrusted to three persons (to be appointed by the Assembly) the dictatorial right of authorising or forbidding departure, upon pain of confiscation, and of being degraded from the title of citizen. Almost the whole Assembly arose in indignation on hearing it read, and rejected the odious inquisition of state which the proposed law conferred on it. Mirabeau seized the opportunity, and spoke to the following effect : " The Assembly of Athens would not even hear the measure which Aristides had styled as useful but unjust. You, however, have heard it ; but the indignation that has arisen has proved that you were as good judges in morality as Aristides : and the barbarity of the proposition proves that a law on emigration is impracticable (*murmurs*). I ask you to hear me. If there be circumstances when measures of police are indispensable, even against the written laws, it is the crime of necessity ; but there is an immense difference between a measure of police and a law. . . I deny that the project can be submitted for our deliberation ; and I declare that I should believe myself freed from every oath of fidelity towards those who should be infamous enough to name a dictatorial commission (*applause*). The popularity which I have desired to possess, and which I have had the honour (*murmurs at the extreme left of the Assembly*)—which I have had the honour to enjoy like any other, is not a fragile reed ; it is into the earth that I would thrust its roots on the immutable basis of reason and liberty (*applause*). If you make a law against emigrants, I swear I will never obey it."

The project of the committee was *unanimously* rejected. Nevertheless, the Lameths had murmured, and one of them asked for permission to speak, but had conceded it to a deputy of his party, who, in a very obscure proposal, moved the adjournment.

Mirabeau persisted in the plain and simple order of the day, and wished to speak again. Then a man on the left exclaimed : " What then is this dictatorship assumed by M. de Mirabeau ?" The latter, feeling very sure that this appeal to envy—the usual ruling passion of assemblies—would not fail to have the intended effect, rushed to the tribune, and, although the president refused him permission to speak : " I entreat those who interrupt me," said he, " to remember that I have ever opposed despotism ; and I always will. It is not enough to complicate two or three propositions (*disapprobation repeated several times*).—Silence, you thirty members ! . . If the adjournment be adopted, you must also decree that *from now till then there shall be no riot !*"

And there was a riot ; they could hear it but too plainly. The thirty, though they had all that multitude on their side, were nevertheless confounded, and spoke not a word. Mirabeau had brought upon their heads the whole responsibility, and they made no reply. The public and the restless crowd that thronged the galleries waited in vain. Never had a blow been more vigorously applied.

The meeting ended at half-past five, and Mirabeau went to the house of his sister, his intimate and dear confidante, and said to her : " I have pronounced my death-warrant. It is now all over with me : for they will kill me."

His sister and his family had long had the same thoughts, and believed his life to be in peril. Whenever he went out in the evening into the



country, his nephew used to follow him armed, at a distance, in spite of his remonstrances. Several times, they thought that his coffee had been poisoned ; and a letter, still extant, proves that a plot to assassinate him was denounced to him precisely with all the particulars.

This time he had so completely humiliated his enemies, and shown them to be so unworthy of the great position they had usurped, that he might naturally expect every kind of violence ; not that Duport or the Lameths were people to warrant crime ; but, among the fanatical or interested persons who surrounded them, there were many men who had no need of orders.

Accordingly, Mirabeau, though he had a fever, and was moreover fatigued by this violent debate, was determined, the very same evening, an hour after, and whilst the affair was still warm, to go straight to his enemies, direct to the Jacobin Club, enter that hostile crowd, push his way through, and, among the number of furious men who pressed against him, to see whether there was one who would dare to attack him, either with words or with a dagger.

It was seven o'clock in the evening when he entered, and the hall was full. The dumb members of the Assembly had now recovered the use of speech. Duport was in the tribune ; he appeared disconcerted. Instead of coming to the point, he wandered from it, and became lost in an interminable preamble, ever speaking of Lafayette, but thinking of Mirabeau. Several reasons contributed to his hesitation. Far superior to the Lameths, he probably perceived that if he inflicted an irreparable blow on Mirabeau, and succeeded in turning him out of the Jacobin Club, he might find that he had been working only for the advantage of Robespierre. At length, he took the decisive step ; not having said anything in the morning, and to say nothing again in the evening, would have been falling very low. "The enemies of liberty," said he, "are not far off." This was received with thundering applause. Everybody looked at Mirabeau, and several went insolently and applauded before his face. Then Duport alluded to the meeting in the morning, not without some show of respect, declaring himself the admirer of this great genius, but maintaining that the people needed before everything else an upright serious character ; he also reproached Mirabeau with the pride of his *dictatorship*. Towards the end of his speech, he appeared once more to be affected in this final struggle, and uttered this well-devised sentence, which everybody considered affecting : "Let him be a good citizen, and I run to embrace him ; and though he turn aside his face, I shall rejoice in having made him my enemy, provided he be friendly to the public good."

Thus, he left Mirabeau room for repentance, pardoned his conqueror, and offered him, as it were, absolution from the hands of the Jacobins.

But Mirabeau did not avail himself of this generosity. Amid the applause bestowed on Duport, which for him was the thunder of excommunication, he advanced with a hasty step and exclaimed : "There are two kinds of dictatorship, one of intrigue and audacity, and the other of talent and reason. Those who have not founded or kept the former, and who know not how to secure the latter, have nobody to blame but themselves." Then, asking the reason of their silence in the morning, he

assured them that his conscience did not reproach him for having maintained an opinion which, for four whole hours, had appeared to be *that of the National Assembly*, and which none of the *leaders of public opinion* had attacked. This was a bitter justification ; for the word *leaders* was grating to the ears of the Jacobins. "Moreover," added he, boldly, "my sentiment on emigration is the universal opinion of all philosophers and wise men ; if one be mistaken in company with so many great men, there is ground for consolation." According to this insinuation, therefore, the Jacobins were not great men.

Duport's respectful language and Mirabeau's provoking apology had violently exasperated Alexandre de Lameth. Moreover, he plainly perceived that the Jacobins were incensed, and he felt that he was about to express the general hatred with his own ; all this transported him beyond the bounds of reason, and made him blind to every political consideration. He thought only of the Assembly, and no longer beheld two men, in whom, however, everything at the moment centred. He did not see Mirabeau, so close to him, whose monarchical opinions differed in reality but little from his own, and whom he ought to have tried to conciliate ; neither did he any longer see the pale-faced Robespierre, who, silent, as in the morning, was quietly waiting till Mirabeau was destroyed.

Lameth, addressing himself first to the richest fund of human nature, pride and envy, repeated and envenomed Mirabeau's imperious apostrophe : "Silence, you thirty members !" Then appealing to party spirit, the special vanity of the Jacobins : "The friends of despotism," said he, "the friends of luxury and wealth, justly alarmed by the progress of this society, illustrious throughout the world, have sworn its destruction. Now, this is the last plot that they have planned. They have said : 'There are 150 incorruptible Jacobin deputies ; well then ! we will ruin them ; we will invent so many libels that they will be looked upon as factious.' Ah ! gentlemen, had I not been acquainted with this plot, I should have spoken this morning. O miserable situation, for patriots to be forced to be silent and accept expedients ! At the first words I uttered, they raised an outcry of 'Factious !' next, they made a riot, and then said to the king : 'Well ! Sire, behold the Jacobins undone !' Who is now the centre of your enemies ? Mirabeau, ever Mirabeau. Then again, he has drawn up the proclamation of the departments ; and it is you whom he denounces therein as the factious who are to be exterminated."—Then turning towards Mirabeau : "When you thus denounced the factious, I carefully refrained from uttering one word by way of objection ; I let you speak on, for it was important for us to know you. If there be any one here who did not see your perfidy this morning, let him belie me !"—A voice : "No."—"Who dares say No ?"—The same voice : "I meant to say, M. de Lameth, that no member of the Assembly could contradict you."—Nobody having protested, Lameth cleverly took advantage of Mirabeau's expression "*Leaders of public opinion*." He flattered all those who had remained silent, and urging the thing with the true genius of Tartufe : "Insolent distinction !" said he ; "it is a misfortune for the nation that so many modest deputies are not the *leaders of public opinion*,—so many excellent citizens !—In them,

patriotism is religion ; and *they are satisfied with letting heaven alone behold its fervour!* This does not render them less precious to their native land ; and would to God that you had served it as well by your speeches as they have by their silence !”

Among other things, Lameth made use of a furious expression, which betokens a fund of hatred such as is seldom revealed : “ I am not one of those,” said he, “ who think good policy dictates that M. de Mirabeau should be treated carefully, *that he ought not to be driven to despair.*”

Mirabeau was sitting near at hand, “ and drops of perspiration,” says Camille Desmoulins, “ poured down his face.”

Yes, Camille was right. The great orator who, on a question of equity, liberty, and humanity, saw himself perishing, was not unworthy, after all, to have also his bloody sweat, and to drink the bitter cup. Whatever this vicious, this culpable, this unfortunate great man may have done, let him be cleansed from his transgressions. To have suffered for justice, for the humane principle of our Revolution, will be his expiation and his redemption before posterity.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DEATH OF MIRABEAU (APRIL 2, 1791).

It is much to be regretted that we have not Mirabeau's reply, which, if we may judge from its results, must have been a triumph of address and eloquence. We have an extract of it which has probably been garbled ; but, nevertheless, we may still perceive from it that this reply must have contained, among many flattering and insinuating expressions, bursts of irony, like the following : “ And how could they attribute to me the absurd design of representing the Jacobins as factious, when they so well refute this calumny every day, by their replies and their public meetings ? ”

Notwithstanding this, the great orator showed himself so cleverly a complete Jacobin, so sensible of their good opinion, that one moment was sufficient for him to change every mind. He confessed that he had jeered the Jacobins, though doing them justice at the same time. He thus gained their applause ; but when, in concluding, he exclaimed : “ I will remain with you till the day of ostracism,” he had once more made a conquest of their hearts.

He then went out, and never returned. His genius was quite contrary to that of the Jacobins. He could not willingly undergo the yoke of that spirit of mediocrity, which, possessing neither that need of talent which a select society experiences, nor the enthusiastic impulse of the people, with their natural and deep-seated instinct, requires that one should be of a middling stamp, just of the same standard, neither higher nor lower, and which, however distrustful it may be, allows itself nevertheless to be directed by tactics of a middling order. The Revolution, which was ever rising, raised these active mediocrities to power.

The middle, citizen class, of which the most restless portion were agitators in the Jacobin Club, had now its advent ; this class was truly middling in every respect, being middling in fortune, mind, and talent. Great talents were uncommon ; and still more uncommon was political invention whose language was very monotonous, and always copied from Rousseau. Wide and immense was the difference between this and the sixteenth century, when everybody possessed a powerful language, a language of his own, which he had made himself, and the energetical defects of which are always interesting and amusing. Except four men of first rank,—three orators and one writer,—all the others are of a secondary order. Lafayette, the transient idol, and the future idols, the Girondists and the Montagnards, are generally of a middling stamp. Mirabeau beheld himself literally annihilated by mediocrity.

It was like, overwhelmed by a rising tide rushing in from the open sea, and he, a robust wrestler, was then on the shore, in the ridiculous attitude of opposing the ocean, the waves of which were ever rising. Yesterday the water was up to his ankle ; to-day it reaches his knee ; to-morrow it will rise to his waist. And then the waves of this ocean had neither figure nor form ; every time he grasped them in his powerful hand, they slipped from him, weak, vague, and colourless.

It was an unprofitable struggle ; by no means one of opposite principles. Mirabeau was scarcely able to define what he contended against. It was certainly neither the people, nor a democratic government. Mirabeau would have found his advantage in a republic ; for he would undoubtedly have been the first citizen. He was struggling against an immense, yet very feeble party, composed of different appearances, and which itself desired nothing more than an appearance,—something indefinable, an undiscoverable middle state, neither a monarchy nor a republic, a mongrel, hermaphrodite, or, rather, a neuter party, and impotent, restless in proportion to its impotency.

The most shockingly ridiculous feature in the situation of things, is, that it was this nonentity which, in the name of a still undiscovered system, organised the Reign of Terror.

Mirabeau was seized with grief and disgust. He began to perceive that he was the dupe of the Court, which had cheated and mystified him. He had dreamed of acting the part of arbiter between the Revolution and the Monarchy, and he had expected to acquire an ascendancy over the queen, as a man, and a statesman, and to save her. But the queen, who desired less to be saved than to be avenged, would not listen to any reasonable idea. The means that he proposed were those that she most obstinately rejected,—*To be moderate and just, and always in the right ; to act slowly, but steadily, on public opinion, especially in the departments ; hasten on the close of the Assembly from which nothing could be expected ; form a new one, and cause it to revise the constitution.* (*Mémoires de Mirabeau*, vol. viii.)

He wanted to save two things,—royalty and liberty ; believing royalty itself to be a guarantee for liberty. In this twofold attempt he met with a great obstacle, the incurable silliness of the Court that he defended. The right side of the Assembly, for instance, having ventured to make an insolent and extremely imprudent sally against the national colours,

Mirabeau replied by a fierce oration, in the very words that France would have used, if she had spoken. In the evening, he received a visit from M. de Lamarck, who came, inconsolable, to upbraid him, on the part of the queen, and complain of his violence. He turned his back on him, and replied with indignation and contempt. And in his speech on the regency, he demanded, and caused it to be decreed, that women should be excluded from it.

The Court did not wish seriously to make use of his assistance, but only to compromise him and make him unpopular ; and it had, in a great measure, obtained this latter point. Of the three parts which may tempt genius in revolutions,—those of Richelieu, Washington, and Cromwell,—neither was practicable for him to perform. The best thing that remained for him to do, was seasonable death. Accordingly, as if he had been impatient to die, he was, throughout this month, which was his last, even more furiously prodigal of his life than usual. We find him everywhere ; at the department, he accepts new functions in the National Guard ; and yet he scarcely ever leaves the tribune, where he enlightens every subject with intelligence and talent, descending to specialties which would have been supposed to be most foreign to him (I allude to the speeches on the mines).

He went about speaking and acting, and yet he felt he was dying, and believed himself to be poisoned. Far from combating his languor by a different manner of living, he rather seemed eager to anticipate his death. About the 15th of March, he passed a night at table with females, and his health grew worse. He had but two decided tastes,—women and flowers :\* moreover, we must make a distinction: women worthy of his affection ; for, with Mirabeau, pleasure was never separated from love.

On Sunday, the 27th of March, he was in the country, at his small residence at Argenteuil, where he was charitably employed in doing good to the poor. He had ever sympathised with the miseries of mankind ; and he became still more humane at the approach of death. Here he was seized with a cholic, of which he had previously had attacks, accompanied with inexpressible agony, and found himself dying alone, without a physician or any assistance. Assistance came at length ; but it was of no avail, for, in five days, he expired.

Nevertheless, on Monday, the 28th, though death was stamped upon his countenance, he was obstinately resolved to go once more to the Assembly. The question on the mines, a very important affair for his friend, M. de Lamarck, whose fortune was engaged in them, decided him. Mirabeau spoke five times ; and, though more dead than alive, was once more victorious. On leaving the Assembly, all was over. With that last effort, he sacrificed the rest of his life to friendship.

On Tuesday, the 29th, a report that Mirabeau was ill spread a strong sensation throughout Paris, and all men, even his adversaries, then felt

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\* Etienne Dumont, ch. xiv., p. 273.—“ Mirabeau used always to write surrounded with flowers. His taste was more delicate than has been stated. He ate plentifully, like a man of his strength, and one so prodigal of his energies ; but he never drank to excess : his eloquence was not, like that of Fox, Pitt, and other English orators, inspired by the fumes of wines.”



how much they loved him. Camille Desmoulins, who was then waging war so violently against him, feels his heart yearn once more towards his former friend ; and the furious editors of the "Revolutions of Paris," who were at that moment proposing the suppression of royalty, say that the king has sent to inquire about Mirabeau, and add, "Let us feel grateful that Louis XVI. did not go himself ; it would have occasioned a fatal diversion ; for the people would have adored him."

On the Tuesday evening, the crowd thronged about the sick man's door. On the Wednesday, the Jacobins sent him a deputation, headed by Barnave, from whom he received with pleasure an obliging expression that was related to him. Charles de Lameth had refused to join the deputation.

Mirabeau was afraid of being beset by priests, and had given orders that the curate should be told, if he came, that he had seen, or was to see, his friend, the bishop of Autun.

Nobody was ever more noble and affectionate in death. He spoke of his life as of the past, and of *himself*, who had been, and had ceased to be. He would have no other physician than his friend Cabanis, and was totally given up to friendship and to the idea of France. What gave him the most uneasiness in dying, was the doubtful threatening attitude of the English, who seemed to be preparing war. "That Pitt," said he, "is governing with threats, rather than with deeds ; I should have given him some trouble, if I had lived."

They spoke to him of the extraordinary eagerness of the people in inquiring about his health, and of the religious respect and silence of the crowd which was afraid of troubling him. "Ah ! the people," said he, "such good people well deserve that a man should sacrifice himself for them, and do everything to found and strengthen their liberty. It was my glory to live for them ; and it is my consolation to feel that I am dying amidst the people."

He was full of gloomy presentiments about the destiny of France : "I am carrying away with me," said he, "the funeral of monarchy ; its remnants will become the prey of the factious."

The report of a cannon having been heard, he exclaimed, with a start : "Is this already the funeral of Achilles ?"

"In the morning of the 2nd of April," says Cabanis, "he ordered his windows to be opened, and said to me in a firm tone : 'Friend, I shall die to-day. On such a day, it only remains to perfume oneself, and then, crowned with flowers, and surrounded with music, to be lulled agreeably to that sleep from which there is no waking.' He then called his valet-de-chambre : 'Come,' said he, 'prepare to shave me, and to dress me carefully and completely.' He ordered his bed to be moved nearer an open window, in order that he might contemplate the first symptoms of vernal vegetation on the trees in his little garden. The sun was shining ; and he exclaimed : 'If this be not God, it is at least his cousin-german.' Soon after, he lost the use of speech ; but he still replied by signs to the proofs of friendship which we showed him. The slightest attentions affected him, and caused him to smile ; and when we approached him, he did all he could to embrace us."

His sufferings being excessive, and as he was unable to articulate any



longer, he wrote the word "Sleep;" and, desirous of abridging this useless agony, he asked for opium, and expired about half-past eight, after having just turned round and raised his eyes to heaven. The plaster that has taken the impression of his countenance thus fixed, exhibits only a sweet smile, a calm sleep, and pleasant dreams.

The grief inspired by his death, was intense and universal. His secretary, who adored him, and had several times drawn his sword in his defence, endeavoured to commit suicide. During his illness, a young man had presented himself, asking whether they would try a transfusion of blood, and offering his own to reanimate and revive Mirabeau. The people caused the theatres to be shut, and even dispersed and hooted a ball, which seemed an insult to the general grief.

Meanwhile, the body was opened. Sinister reports were in circulation; and any inconsiderate word that had confirmed the idea of poisoning, might have cost the lives of persons who, perhaps, were innocent. Mirabeau's son assures us that the greater part of the surgeons who performed the autopsy, "found indubitable traces of poison;" but that they prudently remained silent.

On the 3rd of April, the department of Paris went to the National Assembly, and demanded and obtained that the church of Sainte-Geneviève should be consecrated to the burial of great men, and that Mirabeau should be placed there the first. The front of the edifice was to be inscribed with these words: "*Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante.*" Descartes was there; and Voltaire and Rousseau were also to be brought thither. This, says Camille Desmoulins, was a grand decree! There are a thousand sects and a thousand churches among nations; and in one nation, the holy of holies for one is an abomination for another. But for this temple and these relics, there will be no disputes. This basilic will unite all men to its religion.

On the 4th of April, took place the funeral procession, the most extensive and popular that had ever been in the world, before that of Napoleon on the 15th of December, 1840. The people alone managed the police, and admirably; and no accident happened in that crowd of three or four hundred thousand men. The streets, boulevards, windows, roofs, and trees, were all loaded with spectators.

At the head of the procession, walked Lafayette; next, surrounded by the twelve *huissiers à la chaîne*, came Tronchet, the president of the National Assembly; and, after him, the whole Assembly, without any distinction of party. Sieyes, Mirabeau's intimate friend, who detested the Lameths, and never spoke to them, had nevertheless the noble and delicate idea of taking the arm of Charles de Lameth, thus sheltering them from the unjust suspicion that was impending.

Immediately after the National Assembly marched, in a dense mass, the Club of the Jacobins, like a second Assembly, before all the authorities. They had distinguished themselves by a pompous display of grief, ordering mourning for eight days, and an eternal mourning to be repeated on every anniversary.

This immense procession could not arrive at the Church Saint-Eustache before eight o'clock, where Cérutti pronounced the funeral oration. Twenty thousand National Guards discharged their arms at once, and

all the windows were shattered to atoms ; for a moment people thought that the church would fall in upon the coffin.

Then the funeral procession resumed its course by torch-light,—a truly funeral procession at such an hour. Two powerful instruments were then heard for the first time, the trombone and the tamtam. “Those violent and detached notes overawed the soul and affected the heart.” It was very late at night when they arrived at Sainte-Geneviève.

The character of the day had been generally calm and solemn, and stamped with a feeling of immortality. One would have thought that they were transferring the ashes of Voltaire,—of one of those men who never die. But, in proportion as daylight disappeared, and the procession buried itself in the doubly obscure shadow of night, and gloomy streets, lit by the glare of flickering torches, the imaginations of men also plunged irresistibly into the dark regions of futurity and ominous presentiment. The death of the only great man occasioned, from that day, a formidable equality among all others. The Revolution was, from that time, about to roll down a rapid declivity, by a dusky path to triumph, or to the tomb. And, in that path, it was evermore to be without a man, a glorious companion on the road,—a man of a noble heart, after all, devoid of bitterness, and hatred, and magnanimous towards his most bitter enemies. He carried with him to the grave something that was not yet well known, and which was known but too late : a spirit of peace even in war,—kindness, gentleness, and humanity even in violence.

Let us not yet leave Mirabeau to sleep in the earth ; what we have seen buried at Sainte-Genevieve is the least part of him. His soul and his memory still remain, and ought to give an account to God and men.

One man alone, the honest and austere Pétion, refused to take a part in the procession : he asserted that he had read a plan of conspiracy in Mirabeau's own hand-writing.

The great writer of the time, a young, artless, and fervent mind, who represents its passions and fluctuations the best,—I mean Desmoulins,—varies astonishingly, in a few days, in his judgment on Mirabeau, and ultimately inflicts upon him the most overwhelming sentence. No spectacle can be more curious than that of this athletic swimmer, tempest-tost, as it were, from hatred to friendship, and at length stranded upon hatred.

First, as soon as ever he knows he is ill, he feels affected, and, though still attacking him, he displays the goodness of his heart, and recalls to mind the immortal services that Mirabeau had rendered to liberty : “All patriots say, like Darius in Herodotus : Histæus excited Ionia against me ; but Histæus saved me when he broke down the bridge over the Ister.”

And a few pages further :

“But Mirabeau is dying, Mirabeau is dead ! *What an immense prey has just been seized by death !* I feel even now the same shock of ideas and sentiments that made me remain speechless and motionless before that head so full of systems, when, at my request, they raised the veil that covered it, and I still sought to discover his secret. It was a deep sleep ; and what struck me, beyond all expression, was that it reminded me of the serenity of the wise and righteous. Never shall I forget that death-struck countenance, and the agonising sentiments I experienced on beholding it.”

A week afterwards, a total change takes place ! and Desmoulins becomes his enemy ! The necessity of dispelling the horrible suspicions which beset the Lameths cast the fickle writer into the most violent language. Friendship induced him to betray friendship ! . . . Sublime but childish and immoderate genius, ever rushing into extremes !

"For my part, when they had raised the shroud for me, I confess that, at the sight of a man whom I had adored, I could not shed a tear, and that I gazed upon him with eyes as dry as Cicero's when he contemplated the twenty-three wounds on the dead body of Caesar. I gazed at that grand treasury of ideas, dismantled by death. I suffered as not being able to shed tears over a man who had so great a genius, who had rendered such splendid services to his country, and had wished to have me for his friend. I thought of the reply that Mirabeau dying made to the dying Socrates, of his refutation of the long conversation of Socrates on immortality, by the single word *Sleep*. I contemplated his sleep ; and, unable to divest myself of the idea of his great projects against the completion of our liberty, and revolving in my mind the whole of his two last years, the past and the future, and his last saying,—that profession of materialism and atheism, I also replied by these single words : *You die.*"

No, Mirabeau can never die ; he will live with Desmoulins. He who invoked the people on the 12th of July, 1789, and he who on the 23rd of June uttered the great language of the people to the old monarchy,—the first orator of the Revolution and its first writer,—will live for ever among posterity, and nothing can separate them.

This man, consecrated by the Revolution, and identified with it, and consequently with ourselves, we cannot degrade without degrading ourselves,—without uncrowning France.

Time, which reveals everything, has revealed nothing that really proves the reproach of treason to have been well founded. Mirabeau's real transgression was an error, a serious fatal error, but one that was then shared by all in different degrees. At that time, all men of every party, from Cazalès and Maury down to Robespierre, and even to Marat, believed France to entertain Royalist opinions ; all men wanted a king : the number of republicans was truly imperceptible.

Mirabeau believed that it is necessary to have a king invested with power, or no king at all. Experience has decided against intermediary attempts,—spurious constitutions, which, by the paths of deception, lead to hypocritical tyranny.

The means he proposes to the king for recovering his power, is to be more revolutionary than the Assembly itself.

There was no treason ; but there was corruption. What kind of corruption ? Was it money ? It is true Mirabeau appears to have received sums \* to defray the expense of his immense correspondence with the

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\* However likely Mirabeau and Danton's venality may appear, we must nevertheless observe that we have no other proofs of it than the testimony of their enemies or political adversaries. No document in their handwriting authorises this accusation. Those found in the iron chest are not by Mirabeau, but by Laporte, the intendant ; they give no precise information, and prove only that, at the time of his death Mirabeau had no fixed salary from

Departments,—a sort of ministry that he was organising at his own house. He makes use of this subtle expression,—this excuse which does not excuse him : that he had not been bought, *that he was paid, not sold.*

There was also another kind of corruption, which those who had studied this man will easily understand. His romantic visit to Saint-Cloud, in the month of May, 1790, had transported him with the mad hope of becoming the minister, not of a king, but of a queen, a sort of political husband, as Mazarin had been. This mad expectation became the more indelibly impressed upon his mind, as that single and transitory apparition was a kind of dream that never returned, and which he could never compare seriously with reality. And he treasured up this allusion : he saw the queen, as he wished to see her, a true daughter of Maria-Theresa, violent, but magnanimous and heroic. This error was, moreover, cleverly improved and maintained by M. de Lamarek, who was placed about him day and night,—a man attached to the queen, and also to Mirabeau,—and who, never leaving his side, confirmed in his mind this dream of the queen's genius . . . A queen so handsome, so unfortunate, and so courageous ! She was in want of only one thing,—advice, experience, a bold and prudent counsellor, a manly hand to guide her,—the potent hand of Mirabeau ! . . . Such was the true corruption of this man,—a culpable illusion of the heart, full of ambition and pride.

Now, let us assemble a jury of men of irreproachable conduct, such as have a right to judge,—such as feel themselves pure, free from *bribery*, which is not uncommon, and free from *hatred*, which is rare (how many Puritans prefer vengeance and bloodshed to money !); and having assembled and questioned them, we imagine that they will not hesitate to come to the same decision as ourselves :

Was there any treachery ?—No.

Was there any corruption ?—Yes.

Yes, the defendant is guilty. Accordingly, however painful it may be to say so, he was justly expelled from the Pantheon.

The Constituent Assembly was right in sending thither the intrepid

the Court ; that he was negotiating with it. Ruhl proved nothing, neither did Chenier ; and Mirabeau was condemned by the Convention on mere appearances. Mirabeau's son appears to me to prove satisfactorily that he left scarcely anything but debts. In order to form a serious appreciation of this character, which was far from being pure, we must not, however, forget that Mirabeau, aiming only at energy and audacity, suffered all his life the ridiculous imputation of being a braggadocio in crime. Camille Desmoulins admirably describes the strange satisfaction which Mirabeau testified, when he said to him, "If the Court has not given you a hundred thousand crowns for your speech of to-day, it is certainly robbing you." He appeared flattered by the figure at which his speech was estimated. And, in the interview that he had with Lafayette and Lameth, in 1789, he said, coolly, "What shall we do with the queen? Must we not kill her?" Lafayette was deceived by his serious tone, and replied in the negative. "You are right," said Mirabeau; "a murdered queen is fit for nothing but to furnish a tiresome tragedy to poor Guibert; but a queen humiliated is a very different thing," &c. (See Lameth, Etienne Dumont, Mirabeau's Memoirs, &c.)

orator who was the first organ and the very voice of liberty. And the Convention was right in expelling from the temple the corrupt, ambitious, faint-hearted man, who would have preferred a woman and his own grandeur to his native laud.

It was on a dull day in autumn, in the tragical year 1794,—when France had almost finished exterminating herself,—it was then that, having killed the living, she set about destroying the dead, and banished her most glorious son from her heart, performing this last act of grief with savage joy. The agent of the law, charged with this hideous execution, uses, in his irregular, ignorant, and barbarous *procès-verbal*, which gives us a strange idea of the time, the following expressions, the orthography of which I have faithfully preserved: “The procession (*cortège de la fête*) having halted on the square before the Pantheon, one of the citizens, an usher of the Convention, advanced towards the entrance-door of the said Pantheon, and there read the decree that excludes from the same (*décres qui exclus d’y celuy\**) the remains of Honoré Riqueti Mirabeau, which have immediately been carried in a wooden coffin out of the inclosure of the said temple, and having been given to us, we have caused the said coffin to be transferred and deposited in the ordinary burial-place” . . . This place is no other than Clamart, the burial-ground for executed criminals, in the faubourg Saint-Marceau. The body was transferred thither during the night, and buried, without any indication, somewhere about the middle of the inclosure; and there, according to every probability, it still remains in the year 1848: so that Mirabeau has remained there in the convict burial-ground for more than half a century!†

We do not believe in the justice of everlasting punishments; and it is enough that this poor great man should have undergone an expiation of fifty years. Let us not doubt but France, when she shall see better days, will go and fetch the orator of the Revolution from the bosom of the earth, and place him again where he ought to remain, in his Pantheon, at the feet of the creators of the Revolution, Descartes, Rousseau, and Voltaire. The banishment was deserved, but the restoration is likewise just. Why should we envy him this material sepulchre, when he has a moral one in grateful memory, in the very heart of France?

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\* These words are left as specimens of the bad French to which the author has just alluded.—Translator.

† Our young students who frequent this inclosure, now devoted to anatomical studies, should know that they are daily walking over Mirabeau’s grave. He is still there in his leaden coffin. The centre of the inclosure has never been searched, but only the lateral part, along the walls, and there they have found, in their black robes, in a good state of preservation, some of the priests killed on the 2nd of September. It would be to the honour of the city of Paris to be the first to undertake the glorious task of discovering and rehabilitating Mirabeau, and, if he be not replaced in the Pantheon, of giving him, —what we cannot, without ingratitude, refuse him,—at least a tomb.



## CHAPTER XII.

## INTOLERANCE OF THE TWO PARTIES.—ROBESPIERRE'S PROGRESS.

ON the 7th of April, five days after the death of Mirabeau, Robespierre proposed and caused to be decreed that no member of the Assembly *could be raised to the ministry during the four years following the session.*

No deputy of any importance durst make any objection ; no protestation was made, either by the usual framers of the constitution (Thouret, Chapelier, &c.) ; or by the agitators on the left (Duport, Lameth, Barnave, and their party) ; but, without saying a word, they allowed themselves to be deprived of all the advantage that they might have expected from the death of Mirabeau ; and the entrance to power, which seemed to open before them, was closed against them for ever.

Five weeks later, May 16th, Robespierre proposed and caused to be decreed that the members of the present Assembly could not be elected for the next legislature.

Twice did the constituent Assembly vote by acclamation against itself ; and each time on the motion of the deputy the least agreeable to the Assembly, of one whose motions and amendments it had invariably rejected !

We have here a great change which we must endeavour to explain.

And, first, a very surprising symptom that we perceive of it is, that on the very day after Mirabeau's death, Robespierre assumed a new, audacious, and almost imperious tone. On the 6th of April, he violently reproached the constitutional committee with having *unexpectedly* presented a plan for the organisation of the ministry (presented two months before) ; and he spoke of the "dread with which the spirit which prevailed at their deliberations inspired him." He concluded with this dogmatical sentence : "Here is the essential *instruction* which I lay before the Assembly." And the Assembly showed no disapprobation. It granted him an adjournment to the next day for the substance of the law ; and it was on the morrow, the 7th of April, that, being probably assured of a strong majority, he made the motion of prohibiting the ministry to the deputies for four years.

Robespierre was no longer a hesitating timid deputy ; he had assumed authority. This was perceptible on the 16th of May, when he developed seriously, and often eloquently, this thesis of political morality, that the legislator ought to make it his duty to retire to his rank as a private citizen, and even to shun public gratitude. The Assembly, tired of its constitutional committee,—a decemvirate ever speaking and laying down laws,—felt grateful to Robespierre for having been the first to express a just and true idea, which may be reduced to this formula : "The constitution did not issue from the brain of this or that orator, *but from the*



*very principle of the opinion that preceded and has supported us. After two years of superhuman labours, it only remains for us to give our successors an example of indifference for our immense power, and for every other interest than that of the public good. Let us go and breathe, in our departments, the air of equality."*

And he added these imperious and hasty words : " It seems to me that, for the honour of the principles of the Assembly, this motion ought not to be decreed in too dilatory a manner." Far from being offended by this language, the Assembly applauded, ordered it to be printed, and wanted to vote immediately. In vain did Chapelier ask permission to speak, the motion was voted almost unanimously.

Camille Desmoulins, the habitual and very zealous trumpeter of Robespierre, says very truly that he considers this decree as a masterpiece of policy : " We can easily imagine that he carried things thus with a high hand only because he was in secret intelligence with the self-respect of the great majority, who, unable to be re-elected, eagerly seized this opportunity of levelling all the honourable members. Our trusty friend had calculated right well," &c.

What he had calculated, but what Desmoulins cannot tell, is, that for the two extreme parties, the Jacobins and the aristocrats, the common enemy to be destroyed was the constitution and the constitutional party, the parents and natural defenders of their weakly child.

But Robespierre was too great a politician for us to believe that he trusted entirely to this calculation of probabilities, to this hypothesis founded on a general knowledge of human nature. When we behold him speaking so forcibly, and with so much authority and certainty, we cannot doubt but he was most positively informed of the support that his motion would meet with from the right side of the Assembly. The priests, in favour of whom he had lately ventured so far, and almost compromised himself (March 12th) were able to give him perfect information on the opinions of their party.

On the other hand, if Robespierre's voice seems suddenly more commanding, it is because it is no longer that of a single man ; a whole nation speaks with him,—that of the Jacobin societies. The society in Paris, as we have seen, founded by deputies, and at first possessing as many as four hundred in October, 1789, has at most but a hundred and fifty on the 28th of February, 1791, the day when Mirabeau was annihilated by the Lameths. Who then are the predominant members of the Jacobin club ? Those who are not deputies, but wish to be so,—those who desire that the constituent Assembly may not be re-elected. It was the secret thought, the desire, and the interest of the Jacobins that Robespierre had expressed ; and he becomes their organ. He speaks for them and before them ; and he is supported by them ; for they are the persons who now fill the galleries. This *upper* assembly, as I have already called it, begins to overawe the constituent Assembly from above ; and this reason is not one of the least which induce the latter to desire repose. The galleries interpose more and more, accompanying the speeches of the orators with exclamations, applause, and hootings. In the question on the colonies, for instance, a defender of the colonists was kissed outrageously.

The secret history of the Jacobin society is extremely difficult to unravel. Their pretended journal, edited by Lacroix, far from throwing any light on the subject only renders it more obscure. What is nevertheless very evident, is, that of the two primitive fractions of the society, the Orleans party now declines, discredited by its chief in the affair of the four millions, and by the republican warfare directed against it by Brissot and others. The other fraction (Duport, Barnave, and Lameth) appears also worn out and exhausted ; as though in mortally wounding Mirabeau on the evening of the 28th of February, it had left its sting and its life in the wound. But whether it still acts in the violent riot by which the Jacobins completely destroyed the monarchical club with sticks and stones, is what we cannot positively know. However, what we may say in general of the triumvirs is, that their bad reputation for intrigues and violence, and the ominous (though unjust) reports current against them on the occasion of Mirabeau's death, induced the Jacobins to follow preferably a poor, austere man, free from corruption, and of an irreproachable character. The remarkable scene, noticed by all, at Mirabeau's funeral (Lameth walking arm in arm with Sieyès, and shielded by him from the suspicion of the people,—a Jacobin protected, as it were, in face of the people by the unpopular abbé!) was enough to cause the Jacobin society to reflect. It abandoned the Lameths and attached itself to Robespierre.

The affair of the Jacobins of Lons-le-Saulnier, decided against the Lameths by the society of Paris, about the end of March, seems to be the date of their downfall. One might almost say that they expire with Mirabeau ; both the conquerors and the conquered disappear almost at the same time.

Nothing had more contributed to hasten their ruin than their illiberal opinion on the rights of men of colour. The Lameths had houses and slaves in the colonies ; and Barnave spoke manfully in favour of the planters. The Assembly, wavering between the too evident question of right and the fear of exciting a general conflagration, made this strange decree : " That it would *never* deliberate on the state of persons not born of a free father and mother, unless it was required to do so by the colonies." They were very sure that this demand would *never* come ; so it was prohibiting itself from *ever* deliberating on the slavery of the blacks. The planters wanted to raise a statue to Barnave, as if he were already dead, which was but too true.

Independently of these interests, a secret influence, we must say, contributed likewise to neutralise the Lameths.

Shortly after Mirabeau's death, at a time when it was imputed to them by many persons, a little insignificant man asked, at a very early hour, to speak to Alexander de Lameth, who was still in bed, and he was admitted. This was M. de Montmorin, the minister for foreign affairs. —The minister sits down by the bedside, and begins his confession. He speaks ill of Mirabeau (a sure way of pleasing the Lameths), reproaches himself for the evil course upon which he had entered, and the large sums he had spent, in order to penetrate the secrets of the Jacobins. " Every evening," says he, " I had the letters they had received from the provinces ; and I read them to the king, who often admired the

wisdom of your replies." The conclusion of this conversation, which Lameth forgets to give us, but which is perfectly well known, is, that Lameth, in one respect, succeeded Mirabeau, and became what Barnave had been ever since the month of December, one of the secret advisers of the Court.\*

On the 28th of April, the Assembly took a formidable step, and decided that none but active citizens could be National Guards. Robespierre protested, but Duport and Barnave remained silent; and Charles de Lameth spoke only on a point of little importance.

The real touchstone, the fatal ordeal, was the prohibition of Clubs, now solemnly attacked before the Assembly by the department of Paris,—the prohibition of popular assemblies in general, whether communes, sections, or free associations, their right of making collective petitions and addresses, that of publishing notices, &c. Chapelier proposed a law which deprived them of this right; and it was indeed voted, but not carried into execution. He declared that, without this law, the Clubs would be corporations, and the most formidable of all. Robespierre and Petion stood forward as defenders of the Clubs. But were not Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, the founders of the Jacobins, and their leaders for so long a time, about to speak also? Everybody expected it. . . . But no; they remained silent, utterly silent. They were evidently abdicating.

Robespierre had let fall an expression against them which doubtless contributed to deprive them of every inclination of speaking: "I do not excite a riot. . . . If anybody would accuse me, I wish he would place all his actions parallel with mine." This was defying the former agitators to be able to speak of peace.

In the question on re-eligibility (May 16th), Duport allowed the Assembly to vote against itself; but, on the morrow, when it only remained to vote about the re-eligibility of the following legislatures, he at length broke silence. He seemed to wish to vent, at once, all his vexation and his fears for the future. This speech, full of lofty, strong, and prophetic sentiments, has the greatest blemish that a political speech can have; it is sad and desponding. Duport therein declares—That one step more, and the government no longer exists; or, if it revives, it will exist only to become concentrated in the executive power. Men are unwilling to obey any longer their former despots, but want to make new ones, whose power, more popular, will be a thousandfold more dangerous. Freedom will be lodged in egotistical individuality, and equality in a progressive levelling, even to the division of lands. Even now people are evidently tending to change the form of the government, without foreseeing that it will be necessary first to drown in their blood the last partisans of the throne, &c., &c. Next, alluding specially to Robespierre, he blamed the clever system of certain men who are ever contented with speaking of principles, lofty generalities, without descending to the ways and means, or taking any responsibility; "for it is not one to possess, without interruption, a professorship of natural law."

Duport, in this long complaint, started from an inexact idea, which he

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\* Nothing can be more empty, less instructive, or more cleverly void, than Barnave's *Memoirs* of the year 1791. Lameth cannot equal him in this.

twice repeated : "The Revolution is completed." This single expression destroyed all the rest. The general uneasiness, the presentiment that there was an infinite number of obstacles to overcome, and the insufficiency of the reforms, altogether forced upon every mind a mute but powerful refutation of such an assertion. Robespierre took good care not to seize the dangerous advantage afforded by his adversary ; he did not fall into the snare by saying it was necessary to continue the Revolution. He kept close to the question. Only, as if he had wished to return an idyl for an elegy, he reverted to his former speech, to the peaceful moral ideas "of a retirement prescribed by reason and nature,—a retirement necessary for meditating on principles." He warranted that "there existed in every province of the empire *fathers of families*, who would willingly come forward to perform the duties of legislators, in order to secure to their children morals and a native land . . . And should intriguers depart, it would be so much the better ; for modest virtue would then receive the reward of which they would have deprived it."

This sentimentality, being translated into political language, meant that Robespierre, having seized the revolutionary lever that had fallen out of the hands of Duport (the lever of the Jacobins), was not afraid of shutting himself out of the *official* Assembly, in the name of principles, in order to be the better able to sway the only active and efficacious Assembly, the great directing Club. In all probability, the next legislature, having no longer such men as Mirabeau, Duport, and Cazalés, would be feeble and torpid, and that life and strength would be entirely among the Jacobins. That quiet, philosophical retirement which he prescribed for his adversaries he himself intended to find in the real centre of agitation.

Duport honoured his downfall by an admirable speech against the pain of death, wherein he reached the very bottom of the subject,—this profound objection :—"Does not a society which makes itself a legal murderer teach murder?" This eminent man, whose name remains attached to the establishment of juries in France, and to all our judiciary institutions, had, like Mirabeau, the glory of ending his career on a question of humanity. His speech, superior in every respect to the petty academical discourse which Robespierre also spoke against the pain of death, found nevertheless no echo. Nobody remarked these words, in which we may perceive but too plainly a gloomy presentiment : "Since a continual change in men has rendered a change in things almost necessary, let us at least contrive that our revolutionary scenes be the least tragical . . . *Let us render man respected by man!*"

A serious sentence, which unfortunately was but too applicable ! Man and human life no longer respected. Blood was flowing ; and a religious warfare was about to break out.

As early as 1790, the obstinate opposition of the clergy to the sale of the ecclesiastical estates had placed the municipalities in the most painful embarrassment. They were loth to be severe against persons, and paused in presence of the passive opposition that was brought against them,—passive only in appearance ; for the clergy acted very powerfully by the means of the confessional and the press, by the propagation of libels. They were especially diffusing in Brittany Burke's atrocious book against the Revolution.



Between the timid inactive municipalities and the insolently rebellious clergy, the new religion appeared vanquished. On every side, the societies of the friends of the constitution were obliged to urge the municipalities, blame their inactivity, and, in extreme cases, act in their stead. The Revolution thus assumed a formidable character, falling entirely into the patriotic, but intolerant and violent, hands of the Jacobin Societies.

We must say, like Cæsar, "*Hoc voluerunt*:" they themselves would have it so. The priests sought for persecution, in order to bring about a civil war.

The fatal decree of the immediate oath, the scene of the 4th of January, when these new rivals of Polyeuctes obtained the glory of martyrdom at a cheap rate, inspired the clergy everywhere with joy and extravagant audacity. They now walked erect and haughty, whilst the Revolution seemed ashamed of itself.

One of the first acts of hostility was made, as was proper, by an edifying pontiff, the Cardinal de Rohan, the hero in the affair of the Necklace.\* He thus was restored to favour among respectable people. Living in safety beyond the Rhine, he anathematised (in March) his successor, elected by the people of Strasbourg, and began a war of religion in that inflammable city.

A letter from the Bishop of Uzès who sang *Io! triumphe!* for the refusal of the oath, fell like a spark into the town of Uzès, and set it in a blaze. The alarm-bell was rung, and the people fought in the streets.

In Brittany, the clergy easily succeeded in agitating the gloomy imagination of the peasantry. In one village, a curate said mass to them at three o'clock, giving them notice that they are never to have vespers again, and that they are abolished for ever. Another chose a Sunday, said mass very early, before break of day, took the crucifix from the altar, and presented it to the peasants to kiss: "Now, go," said he, "avenge God, and kill the impious!" Those poor people, thus led astray, take up arms and march against Vannes; and the troop and the National Guards were obliged to block them out of the town; nor could they disperse them without firing on them. A dozen remained dead on the spot.

All this happened at the approach of Easter; and everybody was waiting impatiently to know whether the king would take the communion with the friends or the enemies of the Revolution. This might be already foreseen: he had dismissed the parish curate who had taken the oath; and the Tuileries were full of priests who were non-conformists. It was from the hands of the latter that he took the communion on Sunday, the 17th of April, in presence of Lafayette; who moreover gave the same example himself at his own house, keeping in his chapel a recusant priest to say mass for his wife. The king's communion had this bold feature, that it was done with great ceremony, the National Guard being obliged to attend, and to present arms to the grand-chaplain, &c. A grenadier positively refused to do this homage to the Counter-Revolution. In the

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\* See the beautiful and very complete account in M. Louis Blanc's *Histoire de la Révolution*, t. II.

evening, the district of the Cordeliers thanked him for his refusal, and, in a notice, "denounced to the French people the highest public functionary as a rebel to the laws he had sworn, and authorising rebellion."

This was but too true. The Court needed a scandal and wished for a riot, in order to demonstrate the king's captivity before all Europe. This riot, long projected (according to Lafayette), and delayed, it should seem, by the death of Mirabeau, to whom a part would have been allotted in this comedy, took place during the Easter holidays,—those days which inspire all religious hearts with the greatest emotion—and on the second holiday, Monday, the 18th of April, 1791.

Everybody having had proper notice the day before, all the newspapers echoing the report of the king's departure, from an early hour, and every avenue leading to the palace being thronged with people, the king, the queen, the royal family, the bishops, and servants, filling several well-fitted carriages, prepared at eleven o'clock to take their departure. They stated that they were going only to Saint-Cloud; but the crowd closed about the carriages, and they rang the alarm-bell at Saint Roch. The National Guard vied with the people in blocking up every exit. The animosity against the queen and the bishops was very great. "Sire," said a grenadier to the king, "we love you, but *you alone!*" The queen heard language still more severe, and she stamped and wept with vexation.

Lafayette wanted to force a passage, but nobody obeyed him. He then hastened to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and demanded the red flag. Danton, who luckily was there, ordered the flag to be refused, and perhaps prevented a massacre; for Lafayette, being then ignorant that the supposed departure was only a feint, would have acted with the utmost rigour of the law. After leaving Danton at the Hôtel-de-Ville, he found him again at the Tuileries, at the head of the battalion of the Cordeliers,\* which had repaired thither, without being ordered. At the end of two hours, the court re-entered the palace, having sufficiently proved what it had desired.

Lafayette, indignant at having been disobeyed, tendered his resignation; but an immense majority of the National Guards entreated him to remain, and appeased his anger; for the citizen class trusted to him alone for the maintenance of the public peace.

On Tuesday, the 19th, the king took a strange step, which increased to the utmost the fear that was entertained about his departure. He went unexpectedly to the Assembly, and declared that he persisted in his intention of going to Saint-Cloud and of proving he was free,—adding that he wished to maintain the constitution, "of which the constitution of the clergy forms a part." A strange contradiction with his communion on the previous Sunday, and his support given to the rebellious priests.

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\* Lafayette, very subtle in this matter, pretends that Danton acted thus only because he was paid to do so by the Court. "He had just received," says he, "a hundred thousand francs as pay for an employment which was worth but ten thousand." What is more sure, is, that Danton, by causing the flag to be refused, mortified the general, but prevented him from committing a crime.



It must not be supposed that these priests considered themselves happy to remain unknown, like resigned and patient victims ; they acted in the most provoking manner, showing themselves everywhere, declaiming, threatening, preventing marriages, and bewildering the heads of females by making them believe that if they were married by the constitutional priests, they would be only concubines, and that their children would remain bastards.

The women were at once the victims and the instruments of this species of Reign of Terror practised by the rebellious priests. Women are braver than men, accustomed as they are to be respected and treated with kindness, and thoroughly believing that their risk is not great. Accordingly, they did boldly whatever their priests durst not do. They went about, to and fro, carrying the news, and expressing their opinions warmly and publicly. Not to mention the necessary victims of their irritation (I mean husbands persecuted at home, and tormented to death by their wives' refusals, peevishness, and reproaches), they extended their rigorous displeasure to many of their petty dependents and to their household. Woe to tradespeople who were given to philosophical ideas ; and woe to patriot purveyors ! The women forsook their shops, and all the customers went to the shops of the orthodox.

The churches were deserted, and the convents opened their chapels to crowds of counter-revolutionists—yesterday atheists, to-day devotees. But what was far more serious, these convents boldly maintained their cloisters, and kept their doors still shut against the monks or nuns who wanted to leave them, according to the terms of the decrees of the Assembly.

A lady of the order of Saint Benedict, who had insisted on returning to her family, was exposed to a thousand insults. They refused to allow her to take with her the petty objects of no value for which nuns frequently feel much attachment. They turned her out of doors almost naked ; and when her relations came to protest, they would not open the door, but flung to them out of window a parcel of old clothes, as if they were infected with the plague ; and then loaded the relations with abuse.

The National Assembly received a petition from the mother of another nun, who was detained by main force, the superior and the director preventing her from sending to the municipality the declaration she made of quitting her order. At a convent of the Ladies of Saint Anthony, a young nun (*sœur converse*) having testified some delight at the decree of enfranchisement, was exposed to the outrage and severity of the abbess—a very fanatical lady of noble birth—and of the other nuns who paid their court to the abbess. The nun having found means to give information of her sufferings and danger, escaped in a singular manner ; she passed her head through the turning-box, and a charitable man, after much trouble, contrived to drag the rest of her body through the hole. She was hospitably received by a family in the faubourg Saint Antoine, and a subscription for the poor fugitive was opened at the newspaper offices.

We may easily imagine that such stories were not likely to tranquillise the people, already so grievously irritated by their miseries. They suffered extremely ; yet they knew not whom to blame. All they saw was that the

Revolution could neither advance nor retreat ; at every step, they met with an immovable power,—royalty ; and behind it, an active power,—ecclesiastical intrigue. We must not be surprised if they fell upon these stumbling-blocks. I do not believe that the Jacobins had any need to urge them on ; of the three Jacobin fractions, two (Lameth and Orleans) had then less influence ; as for Robespierre's, it was certainly violent and fanatical ; nevertheless, its leader was not personally a rioter, and still less against the priests than against any other enemy.

The movement was spontaneous, springing naturally from vexation and misery. Women repaired to the convents, and whipped the nuns.

But, according to all probability, the movement was afterwards turned to account ; and they afforded it a grand scene and a solemn occasion. It was the plan of the court to compromise the Revolution, as much as possible, before the Catholic population of the kingdom and before Europe ; and the non-conformists hired of the municipality a church on the *Quai des Théâtres*, in the most frequented part of Paris, where they were to take their Easter Communion. The mob repaired thither, as might easily have been foreseen, waited, became excited by expectation, and threatened such as should present themselves. Defiance is animating and exciting : two women came forward, and were brutally whipped. Two brooms were then suspended over the church door. The authorities removed them, but were unable to disperse the mob. In vain did Siéyes protest in the Assembly in favour of the rights of religious liberty ; the people, being wholly possessed with the sentiment of their misery, were obstinately bent on considering it as a mere political question ; for the rebellious priests and their accomplices appeared to them, not without cause, as kindling here the spark which was to cause a conflagration in the West, the South, and perhaps throughout the world.

Avignon and Comtat already presented a frightful specimen of our imminent civil wars. The former, being reinforced by all the fervent revolutionists of Nismes, Arles, and Orange, was waging war against Carpentras, the seat of the aristocracy.

This was a barbarous warfare on either side, consisting of ancient animosity rekindled, and new incentives : it was not so much a war as a horrible tragedy composed of ambushes and murders. The reprehensible dilatoriness of the National Assembly contributed much towards it, as did also Mirabeau's fatal motion of adjourning the decision ; which did not arrive till the 4th of May, and, moreover, decided nothing. The Assembly declared that Avignon did not form an integral part of France, without France however renouncing her rights. Which was like saying. "The Assembly judges that Avignon does not belong, without denying that it does."

On the same day, May 4th, a brief from the pope, a sort of declaration of war against the Revolution, was spread throughout Paris. Therein he vents insults against the French constitution, declares the elections of the curates and bishops to be void, and forbids them to administer the sacraments. A patriotic society, to pay back this insult in kind, judged the pope, on the morrow, in the Palais-Royal, and burnt him in effigy. According to the same sentence, the favourite newspaper of the priests,

that of the Abbé Royou was likewise burnt, after having been previously dragged in the gutter.

The pope has fallen very low since the fourteenth century. At the blow given to Boniface VIII., the world shuddered with horror; and the Bull burnt by Luther, filled it again with trepidation; but now, the pope and Royou end their career quietly together, without anybody caring about the matter,—executed in the gutter of the Rue Saint-Honoré!

In proportion as the pope retreats, his adversary advances. This immortal adversary (which is no other than Reason), whatever be the disguise it may assume, a juris-consult in 1300, a theologian in 1500, and a philosopher in the last century, triumphs in 1791; and France, as soon as she has found a tongue, returns thanks to Voltaire. The National Assembly decrees to the glorious liberator of religious opinions the honours of victory. It is gained; and he has conquered. Let this king of the mind now triumph and return to Paris, his own capital. Let this exile, this fugitive, who had no place on earth, who lived on the confines of three kingdoms, scarcely daring to settle, like a bird that has no nest,—let him now come and sleep in peace in the bosom of France!

His was a cruel death! He had revisited Paris, and its adoring population that had so well appreciated him, only to suffer a more poignant grief at separation! After being persecuted even to his death-bed, banished even after his death, carried off by night by his friends, on the 30th of May, 1778, and hidden in an obscure grave, his return is decreed on the 30th of May, 1791. He will now return, but in broad daylight, in the sun-shine of justice, and carried in triumph upon the shoulders of the people to the temple of the Pantheon.

To complete his glory, he will behold the downfall of those who banished him. Voltaire is returning; and priests and kings are departing. By a remarkable coincidence, his return is decreed at the time when the priests, overcoming the indecision and scruples of Louis XVI., are about to urge him towards Varennes, to treason and infamy. How could we dispense with Voltaire for so grand a spectacle? He must come to Paris to witness the rout of Tartufe; for he is the hero of the festival. The moment the priest allows his dark conspiracy to appear in broad daylight, Voltaire cannot fail to rise also from the grave. Warned by the audacious revelation of Tartufe, he reveals himself at the same time, lifts his head out of the sepulchre, and says to the other, with that fearful laugh which shakes temples and thrones to the ground: "We are inseparable; when you appear, I appear also!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PRECEDENTS OF THE KING'S FLIGHT.

I CANNOT visit the museum of the Louvre without stopping and musing,—often for a long time in spite of myself,—before Vandyck's picture of Charles I. That picture contains at once the history of England and that

of France. It has had upon our affairs a direct influence such as works of art seldom possess ; and the great painter had unwittingly enshrined therein the destiny of two monarchies.

The history of the picture itself is curious. We must begin it at a rather remote period, and say how this picture came to France.

When the Aiguillon-Maupeou ministry wanted to persuade Louis XV. to quash his parliament, there was a preliminary operation to perform, to restore to an old worn-out king the faculty of having a will, to make him once more a man. To do so, it was necessary to shut up the seraglio in which he was wasting away, make him accept a mistress, and confine him to one woman ; but nothing could be more difficult. It was necessary that this mistress,—some wild, bold, amusing person,—should exclude all the others ; that she should not possess a superior mind, and act the part of a Pompadour, but yet have enough wit to repeat every hour a well-taught lesson.

The Marshal de Richelieu, a great connoisseur in these matters, having well sought, we dare not say where, found a fit person, and, at the same time, to dignify her a little, he found also a simpleton of a good family who undertook to marry her, before she was bestowed on the king. Madame Du Barry, for such was her name, played her part admirably. She surprised the king by her boldness and familiarity, amused him by laughing at him from morning to night, rousing him as far as she was able, and challenging him to be a man and a king. The royal aspirations which were excited in him by these means, were not to be relied upon ; accordingly, she scarcely ever left his side ; following him boldly even to the council, before the chancellor and all those grave personages, and, without any respect for decency, perching, like an ape, upon his arm-chair. This singular Egeria, whispering royalty into his ear night and day, would not perhaps have succeeded with such a man, if, to the aid of language, she had not summoned the assistance of vision,—and thus rendered palpable and visible the lesson she repeated.

Vandyek's picture was bought for her in England, on the strange pretence that the page therein depicted being named Barry, she esteemed it as a family picture. This noble canvass, so worthy of respect, both as a work of genius, and as a monument of the tragedies of destiny, was, shameful to relate, hung up in the boudoir of this favourite, to witness her mad laughter and impudent frolics. She would take the king by the neck, and, pointing to Charles I., exclaim : " Look, France (for thus she used to call Louis XV.), there is a king whose head was cut off, because he was indulgent towards his parliament. Go now, and be indulgent to yours ! "

In that small apartment, so low, (a long row of attics still to be seen in the upper story of Versailles), this large, full-length picture, beheld so closely, and face to face, would have had a painful effect upon any man whose heart had been less degraded and senses less corrupt. No other than Louis XV. could have endured, without suffering, that melancholy noble look, wherein we behold a whole revolution, and that eye, so full of fatality, which pierces as it gazes on you.

The reader may remember that the great master, by a kind of divination, has painted Charles I., by anticipation, as in the last days of his



flight : you see him as a simple *cavalier*, in a campaign against the *round-heads*. He seems as though he had been gradually forced to retreat to the sea, where he stands solitary and forlorn. This king of the seas, this lord of the isles, has now the sea for his enemy ; before him lies the roaring ocean, and behind, the scaffold awaits him.

This melancholy picture, transferred, under Louis XVI., to the king's apartments, naturally followed him to Paris with the furniture of the palace of Versailles. No other could make a greater impression on his mind, which was exceedingly engrossed with the history of England, and especially with that of Charles I. He used constantly to read Hume and other English historians, in their own language ; and he had retained thus much : that Charles I. had been put to death for having made war on his people, and that James II. had been declared to have abdicated for having forsaken his people. If there was one fixed idea in his mind, it was not to expose himself to the fate of either : never to draw the sword, and never to quit the soil of France. Although undecided in his language, and slow in forming a resolution, he was very obstinate in the ideas that he had once conceived ; and no influence, not even the queen's, could then shake his opinion. This resolution of not acting, in order not to compromise himself, was moreover perfectly consonant to his natural indolence. He was much vexed with the emigrants who were agitating on the frontier, exclaiming, threatening, and boasting of what they would do, without caring how they aggravated the position of the king, whose friends they termed themselves. In December, 1790, at the council held at Turin, Prince de Condé proposed to enter France and march on Lyons, "in spite of whatever might happen to the king."

Louis XVI. had moreover another scruple that prevented him from making war ; which was the necessity of seeking foreign assistance. Now, he was well acquainted with the state of Europe, and the interested views of the different powers. He beheld the intriguing ambitious spirit of Prussia, which, believing itself to be a young, vigorous, and very military nation, was promoting discord on all sides, in order to find some prize for itself. As early as 1789, Prussia came forward to make an offer to Louis XVI. to enter France with a hundred thousand men. On the other hand, the Machiavelism of Austria appeared to him no less suspicious ; he did not like that double-faced Janus, at once devout and philosophical. That country was a tradition for him, both on his father's side and on his mother's : his mother was of the house of Saxony ; and his father, the Dauphin, had believed he died poisoned by Choiseul, a Lorrain minister, a creature of Lorrain-Austria, a pupil of Maria-Theresa, and who had married Louis XVI. to an Austrian princess. Therefore, though fondly attached to the queen, the king became very distrustful whenever she spoke of having recourse to the protection of her brother Leopold.

The queen had no other chance : she was extremely afraid of the emigrants, whom she knew to be debating the question of deposing Louis XVI. and appointing a regent ; she saw with the Count d'Artois her most cruel enemy, M. de Calonne, who had commented and corrected, with his own hand, Madame de Lamotte's pamphlet against her in the shameful *necklace* affair. She had more to dread from that quarter than

from the Revolution. The Revolution, considering her only as a queen, would have simply taken her life ; but Calonne would have been able to bring her to trial as a woman and a wife, to dishonour her perhaps juridically, and imprison her.

She adhered, without any deviation, to the plans of the agents of Austria, Mercey and Breteuil. She trifled with Mirabeau, and afterward with Lameth and Barnave, only to gain time ; for it was necessary that Austria should first get rid of troublesome business in Brabant, Turkey, and Hungary ; and it was also necessary that Louis XVI., cleverly tutored by the clergy, should first allow his kingly scruples to give way to his scruples as a Christian and a devotee ; for the idea of a superior duty could alone make him fail in what he believed to be a duty.

The king, had he been willing, could very easily have departed alone on horseback, without any attendants. This was Clermont-Tonnerre's advice ; but it was by no means that of the queen, who feared nothing in the world so much as being separated for a moment from the king ; for he might, perhaps, have yielded to the insinuations of his brothers against her. She took advantage of his emotion, on the 6th of October, when he believed she had been so near perishing. Bursting into tears, she made him swear that he would never depart alone ; that if they went, they would go together, and escape or perish together. She would not even consent to their departing at the same moment by different roads.

In the spring of 1790, Louis XVI. had refused the offers that were made of carrying him away ; nor did he take advantage of escape during his abode at Saint-Cloud, in the same year, though he had every opportunity of doing so, riding out every day on horseback, or in his carriage, to a distance of several leagues. He was unwilling to leave anybody behind, neither the queen, the dauphin, his sister Elizabeth, nor the princesses. Neither could the queen resolve to leave certain of her confidants, women who possessed her secrets. They would depart only in a body, in one troop, like a battalion.

In the summer of 1790, the affair of the oath required of the priests having much troubled the conscience of the king, they urged him to the measure of writing to the different powers, and of making his protestation. On the 6th of October, 1790, he sent his first protest to the court of a relation, his cousin, the king of Spain,—the one whom he distrusted the least among all the foreign potentates. Next, he wrote to the Emperor (of Austria), to Russia, and to Sweden : and, lastly, on the 3rd of December, he applied to the power that he suspected the most, as having wished from the very first to interfere in the affairs of France—I mean Prussia. He demanded of all “a European congress, supported by a strong army,” without explaining whether he wished this force to be made to act against the Revolution (Hardenberg, I. 103).

Generally speaking, the kings made no haste. The North was in commotion. The revolution of Poland was imminent ; it broke out in the spring (May 3rd), and prepared a new partition. The other states, Turkey and Sweden, destined to be absorbed sooner or later, were postponed. But Liege and Brabant had just been devoured, and the turn of France would come when she should be ripe enough. “Kings,” said



Camille Desmoulins, "having tasted the blood of nations, will not easily cease. We know that the horses of Diomedes, after having once eaten human flesh, would eat nothing else."

Only, it was necessary that France should become ripe and ready before they seized her as their prey: that she should grow weak and torpid by civil war, towards which she was strongly encouraged. The great Catherine wrote to the queen, in order to excite her to resist, the following words, intended to be sublime:—"Kings must pursue their course, without caring for the outcries of the people, as the moon follows its course without being impeded by the baying of dogs;" a burlesque imitation of Lefranc de Pompignan, the more ridiculous in this case, as, to follow up the comparison, the moon was really impeded.

To extricate the moon from this eclipse, the excellent Catherine was agitating all Europe, and acting energetically with her pen and her tongue. If she was able, indeed, by the king's deliverance, to let loose civil war, and afterwards set all the kings fighting for prostrate France, how easy would it be for her, sitting in her charnel-house of the north, to drink the blood of Poland, and gnaw her to the bone?

When the escape was attempted, it was the minister of Russia who undertook to get a passport for a Russian lady, to be given to the queen. Catherine sent no succour; but she was well contented that Gustavus III., the petty King of Sweden (just beaten by her, and now her friend), a prince of a restless, romantic, and chivalrous mind, should go in quest of adventures at Aix, at the very gate of France. There, under pretence of taking the waters, he was to wait for the beautiful queen absconding with her husband, to offer her his invincible sword, and, disinterestedly, teach the good-natured Louis XVI. how thrones may be restored.

Austria, which had been, ever since the days of Choiseul, and the marriage of Louis XVI., in possession of the French alliance, was far more directly interested in the king's escape. Only, in order that jealous Prussia and jealous England should allow her to interfere, it was necessary not only that Louis XVI. should positively give himself up to Austria, but that, a great party declaring for him, and a powerful concourse of royalists being formed on the eastern frontier, Austria should be as though, in spite of herself, obliged and summoned to act by France. *Civil war begun* was the express condition that our faithful ally made for her intervention.

As early as October, 1790, the two Austrian partisans, Mercy and Breteuil, the queen's advisers, insisted on flight. Breteuil sent from Switzerland a bishop with his plan, like that which Leopold sent at a later period; but neither the queen nor the bishop considered it prudent to be the first to speak to the king of the Austrian plan. The queen caused it to be presented to him by one of her firm friends, who had been intimately acquainted with her in her happier days, M. de Fersen, a Swedish officer, who had remained devotedly attached to her. In order not to alarm the king, they merely spoke to him of taking refuge with M. de Bouillé, among the faithful regiments which had just shown so much energy at Nancy, close to the Austrian frontier, and within reach of succour from Leopold, his brother-in-law. The king listened, but remained silent.

The queen next tried *her* influence, and, by dint of prayers and entreaties, at length obtained (October 23rd, 1790,) a general power to treat with foreigners,—a power granted by the king to Breteuil, the queen's secret agent. *Foreigners*, from that time, became no longer all Europe, but specially Austria. Bouillé, receiving notice of this, advised the king to repair preferably to Besançon, within reach of succour from the Swiss, secured by capitulations, and, moreover, less compromising than that of any power. But this was not at all to the taste of the Austrian advisers, who insisted on Montmédy, at two leagues from the Austrian territory.

In order to come to a definite understanding, M. de Bouillé sent, in December, Louis de Bouillé, one of his sons, who, conducted by the bishop, the primitive messenger in this affair, went to converse at night with Fersen in a very retired house of the faubourg Saint-Honoré. The young Bouillé was very young, being only twenty-one years of age; Fersen was exceedingly devoted, but absent and unmindful, it should seem, and as we shall presently judge. Nevertheless, these were the two persons who held in their hands and directed the destiny of the monarchy.

M. de Bouillé, being well acquainted with the court, and knowing that they were quite capable of disowning him, if the business went wrong, had requested the king to write a letter containing every particular, and giving him full authority; which letter was to be shown to his son, who was to take a copy of it. This proceeding was serious and dangerous. The king wrote and signed those words which, two years later, were to lead him to the scaffold: "You must secure, before everything else, *assistance from abroad!*"

In October, the king, in the first approbation that he gave to the project, merely said that he relied on the *favourable disposition* of the Emperor and of Spain; but in December, he wished for their *assistance*. The project at first had had a French appearance. M. de Bouillé's success at Nancy had inspired the hope that a great party, both in the army and in the National Guard, would pronounce for the king, and that France would be divided; it was then sufficient for M. de Bouillé that Austria should make an exterior demonstration, merely in order to give a pretext for assembling a few regiments; meanwhile a fact became manifest which changed the face of affairs,—the unanimity of France.

The affair then became entirely foreign. M. de Bouillé confesses that he needed German troops to retain the few French that remained with him. He *requested*, says his son, assistance from foreigners. At Paris, the escape was plotted in the house of a Portuguese, and directed by a Swede, and the carriage that was used for it was concealed at the house of an Englishman.

Thus, in its minutest particulars, as in its most important circumstances, the business appears, and was, a foreign conspiracy; foreigners being already in the heart of the kingdom and waging war against us by the king. And then, what were the king and the queen, in reality? Foreigners both, by their mothers: he a *Saxon-Bourbon* by birth; she a *Lorraine-Austrian*.

Sovereigns in general, in whom nations seek the guardians of their nationality, thus find themselves, by their kindred and marriages, to be

less national than European, their dearest relations, the objects of their friendship and love, being often abroad. There are few kings who, in waging war against a king, do not find themselves opposed, face to face, to a cousin, a nephew, or a brother-in-law. Is not this relationship, which, in courts of justice, obliges men to excuse themselves from appearing, a cause of just suspicion in that supreme justice of nations which is pleaded in diplomacy or decided by the sword?

The king, under whom the French navy had arisen against England, was certainly not a *foreigner* in sentiment; but he was so by birth. The German was his relation; and so was the Spaniard. If he felt any scruple in invoking the aid of Austria, he combated it by the idea that he was, at the same time, invoking his cousin, the King of Spain.

He was moreover a *foreigner* by a sentiment apart from (and in his opinion superior to) every feeling of nationality: a *foreigner by religion*. For the (Catholic) Christian, the native land is a secondary affair. His true and great country is the Church, of which every kingdom is but a province. The *most christian* king, anointed by the priests at the coronation at Reims, bound by his coronation-oath, and not being absolved from it, considered every other oath as null and void. Although he knew the priests perfectly well, and had not always listened to their advice, he nevertheless consulted them in this matter. The Bishop of Clermont confirmed him in the opinion that the attack on the ecclesiastical estates was sacrilege (March, 1790 ?); and so did the pope, in the horror he felt for the civil constitution of the clergy (September, 1790). The Bishop of Pamiers brought him the plan of escape (in October), and the necessity in which he was placed by sanctioning the decree on the oath required of priests (December 26th), at length removed all his scruples: the Christian sentiment stifled that of the king and the Frenchman.

His weak and troubled conscience feasted on two ideas, those of which we have spoken in the beginning of this chapter: first, he believed he was not imitating James II., not quitting his kingdom: secondly, not imitating Charles I., not making war on his people.—These two points, which the history of England had impressed upon his mind, being avoided, he was afraid of nothing in the world, reposing tacitly on that ancient superstition which has emboldened kings to take so many guilty steps: “What can happen to me, after all? I am the Lord’s anointed!”

He wrote in the letter, which Bouillé had requested, that he would not take one step out of the kingdom on any consideration (not even to return to it instantly by some other frontier), that he was absolutely resolved not to go abroad.

Kings have a special religion; they are devoted to royalty. Their person is a consecrated wafer; their palace the holy of holies; and even their servants and domestics have a sacred, a *quasi-sacerdotal* character. Louis XVI. was keenly wounded in this religious feeling by the scene that took place at the Tuileries in the evening of the 28th of February. Lafayette, at the head of the National Guard, had just put down the riot of Vincennes, and remained convinced that it had been contrived by the palace. On his return to the Tuileries, he found the place full of armed nobles, who were there without being able to give any reason for their

meeting. The National Guards being still excited and in very ill-humour, did not show these noble lords all the respect that people of their quality considered they had a right to expect. They were deprived of their swords, pistols, and daggers, and received a nick-name, which will recur more than once in the Revolution,—*chevaliers du poignard*; disarmed, and departing, one by one, amid the hooting of the guards, some of them received rough usage, and a fraternal correction from the hands of the armed citizens.

Louis XVI, much grieved at this want of respect, was infinitely more touched by the expulsion of the recusant priests, who were obliged to quit their churches in the spring. He received a great number of them in the royal establishments and the Tuileries. He knew nothing about the intrigues of the clergy, neither did he perceive in them what they were,—the organisers of civil war; he entirely forgot the political question, and reduced everything to one of religious tolerance. It is remarkable that even politicians and philosophers, by no means Christian, Sièyes and Raynal, judged the thing in the same manner; and their protestations in favour of the priests, necessarily confirmed Louis XVI. in his opposition to the revolutionary movement. How was it that he, who had granted tolerance to the Protestants, could not enjoy it in the midst of his own palace? He considered himself freed from every oath and absolved from every duty; and he believed he saw both God and Reason arrayed against the Revolution.

Besides, whether he wished it or not, was not the counter-revolution about to be effected? His brother, the Count d'Artois, was then at Mantua, with the Emperor Leopold, and the ambassadors of England and Prussia (May, 1791). This was, in reality, a congress in which they were treating the affairs of France. If the king did not act, they were going to act without him. He did not occupy much space in the plan of the Count d'Artois: this warlike plan, devised by Calonne, his factotum, supposed that five armies, of five different nations, should enter France at the same time. There would be no impediment; the young prince, without any other delay than the customary speeches at the gates of towns, was going to lead all Europe joyously to sup at Paris. In this Iliad, he was the Agamemnon, the king of kings; he bestowed favours and justice; he reigned. But what then became of the king? He would have but the more time for mass and hunting. And what was to be done with the queen? She was to be sent back to Austria, or to a convent.

Leopold answered this romance by another, that, on the 1st of July, the armies should, without fail, be punctual at the rendezvous on the frontier; only, he testified some repugnance at making them enter France. And even though he had really had the idea of doing anything, his sister would have prevented him; for she wrote to him from Paris, not to put the least confidence in Calonne; yet, at the same time, the king and the queen sent word to the Count d'Artois that they trusted to Calonne, and authorised him to treat in their name.\*

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\* See the letters of Leopold and the Queen, published in the *Revue rétro.*



All the measures of the king and the queen, at this period, are double and contradictory.

Thus, they caused unlimited offers to be made to Lafayette (by young Bouillé, his cousin) if he would assist in restoring the royal power (December or January) ; and, almost at the same time, they assured the Count d'Artois that they know Lafayette "to be a villain and a factious fanatic, in whom no confidence can be placed" (March, 1791).

Again, at the time when the king, by his attempt to leave the Tuileries (April 18th), had just demonstrated his captivity before all Europe, he approved a letter, inconsiderately drawn up by the Lameths, in which he is made to say that he is perfectly free (April 23rd). In vain did Montmorin represent the improbability of the thing ; the king insisted ; and the minister was obliged to communicate to the Assembly this singular document, in which he notified to foreign courts the revolutionary sentiments of Louis XVI. In this ridiculous letter, the king, speaking of himself in a Jacobin style, said that he was only the first public functionary ; that he was free, and had freely adopted the constitution, *which constituted his happiness*, &c. This entirely novel language, wherein everybody perceived the stamp of falsehood, and this false jarring voice, did the king incredible harm ; and whatever attachment was still felt for him, could not withstand the contempt inspired by his duplicity.

Everybody supposed that he was writing a contradiction at the same time ; and this was the fact. The king deceived Montmorin, who deceived Lameth (as he had formerly done Mirabeau) ; he sent word to Prussia and Austria, that every step and every word in favour of a constitution was to be taken in an opposite sense, and that *yes* meant *no*.

The king had received a royal education from M. de la Vauguyon, the leader of the Jesuit party ; his natural honesty had gained the upper hand in ordinary circumstances ; but, in this crisis, where religion and royalty were at stake, the Jesuit reappeared. Too devout to have the least scruple of chivalrous honour, and believing that he who deceives for a good purpose cannot use too much deception, he outstepped all bounds, and did not deceive at all.

Austria does not seem to have believed, any more than France, in the honesty of Louis XVI. ; and perhaps, in reality, he still remained patriotic enough to wish to deceive Austria in availing himself of her assistance. He asked her only for some ten thousand men,—an insignificant force, strongly counterbalanced, moreover, by a Spanish army, and the twenty-five thousand Swiss troops which the capitulations obliged them to furnish on the king's demand. Accordingly, the Austrians used no haste ; they waited, alleging the opposition of Prussia and England ; it did not at all suit them to come forward thus *gratis*, and merely for a display, like theatrical figurants, to embolden and rally the royalists, and to create a force for the king ; they asked him, on the contrary, to prove that he had one by "*beginning civil war*."

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*spective*, in 1833, t. i. and ii. in the second series (from the original in the *Archives du Royaume*).—"We reiterate to you a demand for eight or ten thousand men," &c. (June 1st, 1791).

In order to induce them to take upon themselves the buræen of such an affair, it was necessary to give them an interest in it ; if the king had offered Alsace, or at least a few towns, his brother-in-law, the kind-hearted Leopold, would have acted more efficaciously, in spite of his difficulties.

Such was the situation of this poor Louis XVI., and which leads us to pity him, even though he deceived everybody. He could place reliance on nothing, neither abroad nor at home, not even in his own family, where he found nothing but egotism : far from its being his support, it contributed singularly to his ruin.

His *aunts* contributed to it, by hastening to depart before him, thus giving rise to the terrible discussion on the right of emigrating, and diminishing, in proportion, the king's chances of escape.

The Count de Provence (*Monsieur*) likewise contributed to it. He gave the king reason to fear lest he should depart alone, which would have been a real danger for Louis XVI. *Monsieur* was looked upon with much suspicion. He had endeavoured to carry off the king by means of Favras, without having obtained his consent ; and many spoke of making him regent, lieutenant-general, or provisionally king, during the king's captivity.

But nobody contributed more directly than the *queen* to the ruin of Louis XVI.

Being excessively afraid of a separation, never losing sight of the king, but remaining constantly by his side, and wishing to depart at the same time, and with all her friends, she rendered his flight almost impossible.

An extreme solicitude for the queen's safety caused M. de Mercey, the Austrian ambassador, to require, contrary to common sense, and against M. de Bouillé's advice, that a series of detachments should be posted along the road she was about to take : a precaution well calculated to alarm, warn, and agitate the populace, altogether insufficient to check the dense masses of an armed population, and quite useless for the king, who was not at all disliked. We have already seen the real opinion of the people, candidly expressed by a newspaper : "That Louis XVI. used to weep bitterly over the follies which the Austrian (the queen) caused him to commit." Even if he had been recognised, he might have passed ; for few people would have had the heart to arrest him. But the very sight of the queen awakened every fear, and made even the royalists perceive the danger of allowing her thus to conduct the King of France to the armies of foreigners.

The queen influenced, moreover, the execution of the project in a very fatal manner, by choosing for agents, not the most able, but the most devoted to her person, or else the clients of her family ; her faithful M. de Fersen, her secretary, Goguelat, whom she had employed in very secret missions to Esthèrasy and others, and lastly, young Choiseul, an amiable noble-hearted youth, of a family dear to Austria, and of a very great fortune, who made it his glory to receive the queen in a royal manner in her own Lorraine, and was far more fit to receive her well than to save or conduct her. M. de Bouillé evidently wished to please the queen by intrusting to this young man one of the most important parts to perform in effecting the escape.



This journey to Varennes was a miracle of imprudence.\* It is sufficient to make a proper statement of what common sense required, and then to follow an opposite course; by using this method, if every memoir perished, history might still be recovered.

First of all, the queen orders an outfit to be made for herself and her children, two or three months beforehand, as if to give notice of her departure. Next, she bespeaks a magnificent travelling-case, like the one she had already,—a complicated piece of furniture that contained all that could have been desired for a voyage round the globe. Then again, instead of taking an ordinary carriage of a plain appearance, she charges Fersen to have a huge capacious Berlin constructed, on which might be fitted and piled up, a heap of trunks, leathern boxes, portmanteaus, and whatever else causes a coach to be particularly conspicuous on the road. This is not all; this carriage was to be followed by another, full of female attendants; whilst, before and behind, three body-guards were to gallop as couriers, in their new bright-yellow jackets, calculated to attract attention and make people believe, at the very least, from the colour, that they were people belonging to the Prince de Condé, the general of the emigrants!—Doubtless, these men are well prepared!—No, they had never travelled that road. But these guards must be resolute men, armed to the teeth!—They have nothing but small hunting knives. The king informed them that they would find arms in the carriage. But Fersen, the queen's man, doubtless fearing, on her account, the danger of a resistance by force of arms, had forgotten the weapons. All this is a ridiculous want of foresight; but now we behold the miserable and ignoble side of the picture. The king allows himself to be dressed as a valet, and disguises himself in a grey coat and a little wig. He is now Durand, the *valet-de-chambre*. These humiliating particulars are in the simple narrative of the Duchess of Angoulême; the fact is also stated in the passport given to the queen and Madame de Tourzel, as a Russian lady, the Baroness de Korff. Thus, this lady is so intimate with her *valet-de-chambre* (an indecorous arrangement, which alone revealed all the rest) that she places him in her carriage, face to face, and knee to knee!

A pitiful metamorphosis! How well he is disguised! Why, who could know him? Or rather, who would know him now?—France? Certainly not. If she beheld him thus, she would look another way.

“You will put in the carriage-box,” said Louis XVI., “the red coat with gold lace, that I wore at Cherbourg.” . . . What he thus hides in the box would have been his defence. The dress the king of France wore on the day when he appeared against England, amidst his fleet, was better calculated to consecrate him than the holy ampulla of Reims. Who would have dared to arrest him, if, throwing open his dress, he had shown that coat?—He ought to have kept it, or rather to have kept the French heart, as he then possessed it.

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\* The Count de Provence (*Monsieur*), on the contrary, was saved very cleverly. Madame de Balbi, a sensible woman, (and his mistress, if it were possible for him to have had one), persuaded him to trust himself to d'Averay, a young Gascon, who carried him off in a common cabriolet. He travelled alone, and *Madame* went off by a different road. (See *Relation d'un voyage à Coblentz*, 1823).

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE KING'S FLIGHT TO VARENNES (20th—21st JUNE, 1791).

WHAT grieves us, moreover, among other things, in this journey to Varennes, and lessens the idea we would like to entertain of the king's goodness of heart, is the indifference with which he sacrificed, by his departure, and abandoned to death, men who were sincerely attached to him.

By the force of circumstances, Lafayette found himself to be the involuntary guardian of the king, and responsible to the nation for his person; he had shown, in various ways, and sometimes even in compromising the Revolution, that he desired beyond everything else the restoration of the kingly power, as a guarantee of order and tranquillity.

Although a republican in ideas and theory, he had nevertheless sacrificed to monarchy,—his weakness and ruling passion,—his popularity. There was every reason to suppose that, at the startling news of the king's departure, Lafayette would be torn to pieces.

And what would become of the minister Montmorin, an amiable but weak-minded man, and so credulous with the king, that on the 1st of June he wrote to the Assembly, in reply to the newspapers, that he affirmed, "on his responsibility, *on his life*, and on his honour," that the king had never thought of quitting France?

And what especially would become of the unfortunate Laporte, the steward of the king's household, and his personal friend, to whom he had left, at his departure, without consulting him, the terrible task of laying his protestation before the Assembly? The first blow of the popular fury would necessarily fall upon that unfortunate but involuntary messenger of a declaration of war from the king to his people: in that war, Laporte would infallibly fall the first victim; he was to be the first dead man: he might order his coffin and prepare his shroud.

Lafayette, receiving warning from several quarters, would believe nobody but the king himself; he went to him, and asked him whether there was any truth in the reports. Louis XVI. gave such a decided simple answer, and in such a good-natured manner, that Lafayette went away completely satisfied; and it was merely to calm the anxiety of the public that he doubled the guard. Bailly carried this chivalrous feeling still further, and far beyond what his duty prescribed; for having received positive information from one of the queen's women, who had seen the preparations, he had the culpable weakness to forward to the queen this denunciation, which honour, at least, made it his duty to keep secret.

The king and the queen had announced that they would attend the parochial procession of the constitutional clergy on the following Sunday, the day of Corpus-Christi. The Princess Elizabeth testified some repugnance at this. On the 19th, the day before the departure, the queen

speaking to Montmorin, who had just paid his visit to the king's sister, said to the minister, "She grieves me. I have done all in my power to persuade her. Surely she might sacrifice her own religious opinions for her brother."

The king delayed till the 20th of June, in order to wait till the woman who had denounced the affair should quit his service, and also to receive, as he says himself, a quarter's pay of the civil list. Lastly, it was only on the 15th of June that the Austrians were to have occupied the passages at two leagues from Montmedy. The successive delays that had taken place, and the movements of troops commanded and counter-ordered, were not free from inconvenience. Choiseul told the king, from M. de Bouillé, that if he did not depart on the night of the 20th, he (Choiseul) should remove all the posts stationed along the road, and pass over, with Bouillé, to the Austrian territory.

Before midnight, on the 20th of June, the whole of the royal family left the palace in disguise, by an unguarded door, and stood in the Place du Carrousel.

A very resolute soldier, recommended by M. de Bouillé, was to have entered the carriage, to give answers when required, and to conduct the whole affair. But Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children, maintained the privilege of her charge. By virtue of the oath that she had taken, it was her duty, her *right*, not to quit the children; and the word *oath* made a great impression on Louis XVI. Moreover, it was a thing unheard of in the annals of etiquette for the royal children (*Enfants de France*) to travel without a governess. Therefore, the governess entered, and not the soldier; and, instead of an able man, they had a useless woman. The expedition had no leader, nobody to direct it; it was left to go alone and at random.

The romantic character of the adventure amused the queen, in spite of all her fears. She delayed a long time to see the children disguised; she had even the incredible imprudence to go out into the Place du Carrousel, then in a blaze of light, to see them depart. They entered a hackney-coach, driven by Fersen, who, in order the better to mystify those who might follow, took a few turns through the streets, and then returned and waited an hour longer at the Carrousel; at length the Princess Elizabeth arrived, then the king, and next, but much later, the queen, escorted by one of the body-guards; the latter, being little acquainted with Paris, had caused her to cross the bridge, and had led her to the Rue du Bac. On her return to the Carrousel, she saw, with a feeling of joy and hate, Lafayette passing by in his carriage, on his return from the Tuileries, having missed the king's hour of retiring to rest. It is said that, in the childish joy of having tricked her jailer, she struck the wheel of the coach with a switch that she had in her hand, such as ladies were then in the habit of carrying. The thing is difficult to be believed. The coach was going very fast, and it was surrounded by several lackeys on horseback, carrying torches. The guardsman, on the contrary, affirms that she was frightened at the blaze of light, and left his arm to run away in a different direction.

Fersen, the driver, who was conducting so precious a burden in his coach, being hardly better acquainted with Paris than the body-guards,

went as far as the faubourg Saint-Honoré, in order to make for the Barrière Clichy, where the carriage was waiting at the house of an Englishman, Mr. Crawford. Thence, he drove to La Villette, and, in order to get rid of the hackney-coach in which the body-guards had followed, he overturned it in a ditch. He thence drove on to Bondy. There it was high time to separate. He kissed the hands of the king and queen, leaving her grateful, but fated never to meet again, at the moment when he had just risked his life for the attachment of his youth.

Another act of imprudence, among the many which characterised this journey, had been to send forward the female attendants a very long time before the royal family ; so that they had arrived at Bondy six hours before. The postilion who had driven them had remained there, and now beheld, with astonishment, a person, dressed like a hackney-coachman, driving alone a grand carriage drawn by four horses.

Now they are off, though very late ; nevertheless they are going at a furious pace, one guard galloping at the coach-door, another on the box, and a third, M. de Valory, riding before to order horses, and giving munificently a crown over and above to each postilion, which nobody but the king was accustomed to do. One of the traces, having broken, caused them to lose a few minutes ; and the king also delayed the carriage a little by wishing to walk up a hill on foot. However, there was no other impediment ; more than thirty leagues of road, where no detachments had been posted, were now left behind ; and, on approaching Châlons, the queen said to M. de Valory : " Francis, all goes well ; we should have been stopped before now, if it was to have been."

All goes well—but for France or for Austria ?—For, indeed, whither is the king going ?

He had told M. de Valory on the preceding evening : " To-morrow," said he, " I shall sleep at the Abbaye d'Orval," out of France, *on the Austrian territory* !

M. de Bouillé says the contrary ; but even he also shows, and states clearly, that the king having no longer any safety to expect in the kingdom, must have changed his mind, and have at length fallen, in spite of his former resolution, into the Austrian net. The few troops that Bouillé still possessed were so little under his control, that after having gone forward a few leagues to meet the king, he was obliged to return in order to be among his soldiers, to watch over them and keep them in order.

The plan which had seemed French in October, and even so late as December, was no longer so in June, when M. de Bouillé beheld his command so limited, his Swiss regiments at a distance, his French troops gained over, and possessing at most but a small portion of German cavalry. The king knew this, and could no longer heed the repugnance he felt at the idea of taking refuge on the Austrian territory.

Bouillé's first plan was perhaps still more dangerous. If the king went out of France, he unnationalised himself, appeared an Austrian, and was condemned ; he was then a foreigner, and France would have made war against him without hesitation. But Bouillé wanted to wage it on this side of the frontier, in France,—yet hardly in France, not even in a fortress, but in a camp near Montmedy, a movable camp of cavalry, ever changing its position : there it was, as it were on neutral ground,



and could be in the kingdom, or out of it, at the same time. The military position in which it was placed, whilst good against the Austrians, "is still better," says Bouillé, "against the French." The king, when among these regiments of cavalry, behind these flying batteries, backed by the enemy, and able to retreat among them, or open our provinces to them, would have spoken in a decided manner; he would have said for instance: "You have no army; your officers have emigrated; your regiments are disorganised, and your magazines empty; I have let your fortifications throughout the Austrian frontier fall to ruin; you are exposed and defenceless. Well! the Austrians are coming, and so are the Spaniards and the Swiss; thus you are surrounded on all sides. Surrender, and restore the sovereign power to your master." Such might have been the part played by the king, had he become the centre of civil war, and the messenger of foreign warfare, able at pleasure to let in the enemy or bar them out. A few words about constitution would perhaps have been added to annul opposition; and in order that the old Assembly might lull the country into security, and give it up in a decent manner.

Liege and Brabant told plainly enough what was to be expected from this princely language. The Bishop of Liege, after returning with paternal language and Austrian soldiers, had harshly applied the old barbarous punishments of torture and the rack. Our emigrants did not wait for their return to circulate lists of proscription in France. Would the queen be merciful? Would she easily forget her humiliation in October, when she appeared in the balcony, weeping before the people? It was not very likely; for the female who had been the most accused of having led the women to Versailles, namely Théroigne, having been to Liege, was traced from Paris, pointed out, and handed over to the Liege and Austrian police (May 1791), who transported her *as a regicide* to the prisons of Marie Antoinette's brother, in a remote part of Austria. Doubtless there had been a cruel reaction in the taste of 1816; at this last-mentioned period—a period of provostal courts—M. de Valory, the body-guard and courier to the king in the journey to Varennes, was the provost of the department of Doubs.

In the afternoon, about four or five o'clock, says the Duchess of Angoulême (in the simple and natural account furnished by Weber) "they passed through the large city of Châlons-sur-Marne. There they were completely recognised; and many persons praised God on beholding the king, and offered up prayers for his escape."

But everybody did not praise God. There was a great fermentation throughout the country places. In order to account for the presence of the detachments along the road, they had had the unlucky idea to say that a treasure was about to pass, and that they were there to escort it. At a time when the queen was accused of sending money to Austria, this was the way to exasperate the minds of men, or at least to excite attention.

Choiseul occupied the first post three leagues beyond Châlons; he had with him forty hussars, with whom, says Bouillé, he was to secure the king's passage, and afterwards block up the road against every traveller. If the king were arrested at Châlons, he was to deliver him by force of arms. This is not very intelligible; it is not with forty horsemen that

such a town can be resisted ; and how much less if all the country places in the neighbourhood gave their assistance !

Indeed, the peasants were annoyed at seeing those hussars on the road ; they came in crowds and examined them. People even went out of Châlons to them ; they laughed at the treasure ; for everybody knew right well what was the treasure in question. The alarm-bell was beginning to be heard in those villages ; and Choiseul found his position untenable. He calculated, from a delay of five or six hours, that the business had miscarried, and that the king had not been able to depart ; and even if he had departed, their remaining on that road, and thus increasing the uneasiness of all that assembled populace, was an impediment to the journey ; but if the hussars were once removed, the people would disperse, and the road would be free. Choiseul determined to quit the post. The queen's secretary, Goguelat, a staff-officer who was there with him, and who had been employed to prepare everything throughout the road, advised Choiseul to avoid Sainte-Menehould, where the people were somewhat excited. They took a guide, and resolved to pass through the woods ; but they were so impeded by the badness of the roads, that it was morning before they arrived at Varennes. Choiseul ought to have sent Goguelat, or some other, by the high road, so that if the king passed, he might be guided, and notice given to the other detachments ; but, far from doing so, he sent one of the queen's valets, a devoted but frivolous servant, who possessed but little good sense (and who lost the little he had through emotion), with orders to tell the detachments, on the road, there was no longer any hope, and M. de Bouillé had nothing left to him but retreat. Choiseul was bent on retreating immediately out of France, and departing for Luxembourg.

The king arrived just as he departed, and found neither Choiseul, Goguelat, nor troops. "He saw an open abyss." Nevertheless, the road was quiet, and they arrived at Sainte-Menehould. In his anxiety, the king looked out, and showed his face at the coach-door. The commander of the detachment, who had not caused his soldiers to mount, wished to excuse himself, and came forward hat in hand. Everybody recognised the king ; and the municipality, being already assembled, forbade the dragoons to mount. Their inclination was too uncertain for any attempt to be made to detain the carriage against their will ; but a man offered to follow it and to try to get it stopped further on ; and the municipality authorised him expressly to do so. This man, formerly a dragoon, named Drouet, and the son of the post-master, departed accordingly, watched and followed closely by a horseman who understood his intention, and would perhaps have killed him ; but he galloped across the country and plunged into the woods, where it was impossible to overtake him.

Nevertheless, he missed the king at Clermont ; this town, though no less agitated than Sainte-Menehould, and neutralising the assistance of the troops in the same manner by its threats, nevertheless allowed the carriage to pass on. Never would Drouet have overtaken it, if it had not stopped of its own accord, about half-an-hour, at the entrance of Varennes, not finding any post-horses.

Here we find one of the capital errors of the expedition. Goguelat, a



staff-officer, engineer, and topographer, had undertaken to insure and verify every particular, and to place the relays in places where there were no post-houses ; he it was who had given the whole plan to the king, taught him his lesson, and made him repeat it. Louis XVI., who had an excellent memory, repeated it word for word to De Valory, the courier ; he told him he would find some horses and a detachment *before* the town of Varennes ; now, Goguelat had placed them *after* it, and had forgotten to give the king notice of this change in the appointed plan.

M. de Valory, the courier, who was galloping in front, would ultimately have found out the relays, if, as was reasonable, he had been an hour, or at least half an hour, in advance ; but he preferred to take advantage of so fine an opportunity ; he trotted at the coach door, and thus obtained a few words from the august passengers ; and, at the last moment, he would put his horse to a gallop, and give notice to the relays. This was all very well at the other stages ; but at Varennes, it ruined the whole business.

He wasted half an hour in hunting about in the dark, knocking at the doors, and rousing the sleeping inmates. The relay, all this time, was at the other side of the town, kept in readiness by two young men, one of whom was a son of M. de Bouillé : their orders had been not to stir, that they might excite no suspicion ; and they executed these orders but too punctually. One of them might nevertheless have gone, without any danger, to the entrance of the town to see whether the carriage was approaching, and to guide it ; for the presence of one man on the road, even though it had been noticed at that hour, and on so dark a night, would certainly not have appeared so singular as to attract any particular attention.

This history of that tragical moment when the king was arrested is, and will ever remain, imperfectly known. The principal historians of the journey to Varennes derived their information entirely from what was told them. Neither Bouillé nor his son were there ; Choiseul and Goguelat did not arrive till an hour or two after the fatal moment ; and M. Deslons arrived even later. The whole of the evidence would be reduced to two paragraphs (one by Drouet and the other by the Duchess of Angoulême), if M. de Valory, the body-guard who served as a courier, had not recorded his *souvenirs*, at a later period, during the Restoration. His account, somewhat confused, but very circumstantial, bears a character of impassioned simplicity which precludes the possibility of doubting it ; we perceive well that time has had no power of oblivion over his memory in what relates to this affair. The whole of the past existence of the old man has become concentrated in this terrible fact ; dangers, exile, and all personal misfortunes, had passed away from his mind without leaving any lasting impression ; his whole life consisted in that hour : and all was void before and afterwards.

When they had arrived before Varennes, at half-past eleven in the evening, the passengers were all asleep in the carriage, overcome by fatigue. The carriage suddenly stopped ; and they all awoke. No post-horses appeared ; nor were there any news of the courier who was to have ordered them.

The latter (M. de Valory) had hunted about for the horses for a long

time ; at first he had shouted, then examined the wood on each side of the road, and called again, but all in vain. It then only remained to enter the town and knock at the doors, to inquire. Unable to obtain any information, he was returning in despair towards the carriage ; but that carriage and its inmates had already received a terrible blow,—a word, a summons that made them all start to their feet :

“ *In the name of the nation !* ”

A man on horseback, galloping after them, drew up close before them, and shouted in the dark : “ In the name of the nation, stop, postilion ! You are driving the king ! ”

They all remained thunderstruck. The body-guards had neither any fire-arms, nor the idea of using them. The man passed on, galloped his horse down hill, and into the town. Two minutes afterwards men were seen coming out with lights, running about and speaking together, first a few, then more ; the noise of people running to and fro increased, and the little town became illuminated ; and all this in two minutes. Next, there was a beating of drums.

The queen, in order also to gain information, had been conducted by one of her guards to the house of an ancient servant of the Condé family, situated on the declivity leading to Varennes. They had to wait for her ; when she re-entered the carriage, the guards, assembling together, obliged the agitated postilions, by promises and threats, to cross through the town, to drive rapidly over the bridge which divides it, and pass under the town and the vaulted gate beneath : there was no other chance of safety. They had just heard that the commander of the hussars who ought to have waited at Varennes, had, at the news of the king's arrival, and at the noise of the disturbance, galloped away ; the hussars had dispersed, some were in bed, and others drunk. This commander was a German of seventeen or eighteen years of age ; he had received no notice ; but had heard of the event all on a sudden, and lost his senses.

Drouet and Guillaume, a comrade who had followed him, turned these few minutes singularly to their advantage. To turn their horses into a stable that stood open, give notice to the innkeeper that he might warn the others, run to the bridge and barricade it with a cart-load of furniture, and other conveyances, was the business of a few moments. Thence, they hastened to the mayor and the commander of the National Guard ; and though they had mustered only eight men, they hastened after the carriage, which had only reached the bottom of the hill. The commander and the *procureur* of the commune demanded the passports. The queen replied : “ Gentlemen, we are in a hurry.” “ But who are you ? ”—“ It is the Baroness de Korff,” returned Madame de Tourzel. Meanwhile, the *procureur* of the commune had half entered the carriage, lantern in hand, and turned the light upon the king's countenance.

Then the passport is given up ; and two guards carry it to the inn, where it is read aloud, before the municipal authorities and those who happened to be present. The passport is correct, say they, *since it is signed by the king*. But, said Drouet, is it signed by the *National Assembly* ? It was signed by the members of a *committee* of the Assembly. But is it signed by the *President* ? Thus, the fundamental question of the right of France, the knotty point of the constitution, was examined

and settled at an inn in Champagne, in a decisive manner, without either appeal or resource. The authorities of Varennes, the *procureur* of the commune, M. Sauce, an honest grocer, hesitated very much in assuming so great a responsibility.

But Drouet and others insisted, and, returning to the carriage: "Ladies," said they, "if you are foreigners, how is it that you have influence enough to procure fifty dragoons to escort you at Sainte-Menehould, and as many more at Clermont? And then, why is there a detachment of hussars waiting for you here at Varennes? Have the kindness to alight and come and give an account of yourselves at the municipality."

The travellers did not stir, and the municipal authorities showed no wish to force them to alight. The burgesses were arriving slowly; for the greater number, on hearing the beating of the drums, were unwilling to leave their beds. It was necessary to speak to them in a louder tone; therefore Drouet and the patriots hastened to the steeple and rang the alarm-bell, in a furious manner, with all their might. It was heard by all the outskirts of the town. . . The peasants knew not whether it was a fire or the enemy; but they ran and called to each other, and armed themselves with guns, forks, scythes, or whatever they possessed.

The procurator of the commune, M. Sauce, the grocer, found himself extremely compromised, whether he acted or not; but he had for his wife a superior woman, who probably directed him at that critical moment. To take the king to the Hôtel-de-Ville was offending the respect due to royalty; to leave him in his carriage, was the way to ruin himself in the opinion of the patriots; so he took a middle course and conducted the king to his shop.

Therefore, presenting himself at the coach-door, hat in hand: "The municipal council," said he, "is deliberating on the means of permitting the travellers to continue their journey; but a report has spread here that it is our king and his family that we have the honour to receive within our walls. . . I humbly beg them to allow me to offer them my house, as a place of safety for their persons, till the result of the deliberation be known. The concourse of people in the streets is increased by that of the rural population in the neighbourhood, attracted hither by our alarm-bell; for, in spite of our will, it has been ringing for a quarter of an hour, and perhaps your majesty might be exposed to insults that we could not prevent, but which would overwhelm us with grief."

There was no possibility of contradicting the good man's words; for the alarm-bell was heard but too plainly, and no assistance had arrived. The body-guards had tried, but in vain, to remove the furniture and carts which encumbered the narrow passage of the bridge. Deadly threats were also uttered about the carriage, and several men, armed with guns, were pretending to take aim at it. The three ladies, the two children, and Durand, the *valet-de-chambre*, consequently alighted, and entered the grocer's shop. The valet was accused of not being really what he appeared to be; but he affirmed and maintained that his name was Durand. However, as all the by-standers shook their heads incredulously, "Well then!" said he, "Yes, I am the king; behold the queen and my children; we conjure you to treat us with the respect that

the French have always shown to their sovereigns." Louis XVI. was not fond of making speeches, and he said no more. Unfortunately, his dress and his wretched disguise spoke but little in his favour: this lackey, in his small wig, could hardly remind them of the king. The terrible contrast between his rank and that dress was calculated to inspire rather pity than respect. Several persons burst into tears.

Meanwhile the tolling of the alarm-bells was increasing in an extraordinary manner; for the bells of the village churches, in answer to those of Varennes, were in their turn ringing the alarm. All the dark landscape was now in commotion, and from the steeple distant lights might have been seen hurrying to and fro; a storm seemed to be gathering on all sides—a tempestuous multitude of armed men, full of consternation and excitement.

"What!" said they, "the king running away! the king going over to the enemy! he is betraying the nation!" This word *enemy*, terrible in itself, sounds still more terrible to the ears of the inhabitants of the frontier, who are so exposed to the enemy and all the calamities and miseries of invasion. Accordingly, the first who heard this word on entering Varennes, could no longer contain their indignation at the idea of a father betraying his own children!

Our French peasants had, at that time, scarcely any other political notion than that of a paternal government; it was not so much a revolutionary spirit that rendered them furious, as the horrible impious idea of children abandoned by a father, and confidence betrayed!

These rusties entered the grocer's shop; "What!" cried they, "is that the king!—the queen! Is that all?" There was no imprecation that they did not vent against them.

Meanwhile, a deputation arrived from the commune, headed by Sauce, still submissive and respectful: "Since," said he, "the inhabitants of Varennes can no longer doubt but they have really the happiness of possessing their king, they now come to receive his orders." "My orders, gentlemen?" returned the king. "Order my carriages to be got ready, that I may depart."

Choiseul and Goguelat at length arrived with their hussars; next, M. de Damas, the commander of the post at Sainte-Menehould, who came almost alone, having been abandoned by his dragoons. It was not without difficulty that these gentlemen had penetrated into the town: they had been forbidden to enter in the name of the municipality, and had even been fired at by the people. At last they reached the grocer's house, and hastened up a winding staircase to the first floor, where they found, in the outer room, a number of peasants, two of whom, armed with pitch-forks, exclaimed: "You cannot pass!" They passed on, however, to the second room, where they found the royal family. They there beheld a strange spectacle: the dauphin asleep on a tumbled bed, the body-guards and the female attendants sitting on chairs, the governess, the princess royal, and Madame Elizabeth on benches, near the window; whilst the king and queen were standing, talking with M. Sauce. On a table were a few glasses, with some bread and wine.

"Well, gentlemen," said the king, "when do we depart?"—"Sire," replied Goguelat, "when it pleases your majesty."—"Give your orders,



sire," added Choiseul, "I have forty hussars with me ; but no time must be lost ; for, in an hour, they will be all gained over."

He told the truth. Those hussars were still bewildered by the astounding news that they had just received, and were now staring at each other and exclaiming : "*Der König ! Die Königin !* (The King ! The Queen !)" But, Germans as they were, they could not help seeing the unanimity of the French ; for they had received proofs of it even in the cross-country roads through which they had just passed with M. de Choiseul. He confesses that the alarm-bell was ringing against him from village to village ; that he was obliged several times to force his way sword in hand ; that the peasants even succeeded in surrounding four hussars who formed his rear-guard ; and that he was obliged to make a charge to disengage them. These Germans, who beheld themselves alone amidst so vast a populace, and who knew, after all, that they were paid and fed by France, could not easily resolve to cut down people who came forward in a friendly manner to shake hands and drink with them.

At this critical moment, when every minute was of the utmost importance, and before the king had been able to give an answer to Choiseul, the municipality and the officers of the National Guards rushed tumultuously into the apartment. Several of them fell upon their knees : "In God's name, sire," cried they, "do not forsake us ; do not quit the kingdom." The king endeavoured to pacify them : "It is not my intention, gentlemen ; I do not leave France. The insults that I have suffered, forced me to quit Paris. I am going only to Montmédy ; and I invite you to accompany me thither. Only give orders, I pray you, for my carriages to be got ready."

The municipal authorities departed. This was the last moment that remained at the disposal of Louis XVI. ; it was two o'clock in the morning ; and Choiseul and Goguelat were waiting for his orders. The house was surrounded by a mob of different people, badly armed and ill-organised, and for the most part without fire-arms ; and even such as had any would not have fired on the king (with the exception, perhaps, of Drouet), and still less on the children. The queen alone might have incurred a real danger ; and to her, therefore, Choiseul and Goguelat now addressed themselves, asking her whether she would mount on horseback and depart with the king, who would hold the dauphin. The bridge was impracticable ; but Goguelat was acquainted with the fords of the little river ; and surrounded by thirty or forty hussars, they were sure of passing. Once on the other side, there was no danger ; for the people of Varennes had no horsemen to follow in pursuit.

This hazardous ride however was, we must confess, enough to frighten a woman, even though endowed with courage and resolution. The queen replied to them : "I will not take any responsibility on myself ; *it was the king who decided on this step* ; it is therefore for him to give orders ; and it is my duty to follow him. After all, M. de Bouillé will surely soon arrive" (Goguelat, p. 29).

"True," returned the king, "and can you warrant me that in this scuffle, a shot may not kill the queen, my sister, or the children ? Besides, let us reason calmly. The municipality does not refuse to let me pass :

it merely requests me to wait till daybreak. Young Bouillé departed about midnight to give notice to his father at Stenay, which is only eight leagues off,—a ride of two or three hours. M. de Bouillé cannot fail to arrive here in the morning; and then we can depart in safety, without either danger or violence."

During this time, the hussars were drinking with the people, and drinking "To the Nation!" At about three o'clock, the municipal authorities returned once more, but with this short speech of a terrible signification: "The people, being absolutely opposed to the king's continuing his journey, have resolved to despatch a courier to the National Assembly, in order to be informed of its intentions."

M. de Goguelat having just gone out to judge of the position of affairs, Drouet advanced towards him, and said: "You want to carry off the king; but you shall not have him alive!" The carriage was surrounded by a crowd of armed people; and, on Goguelat approaching with a few hussars, the major of the National Guard who commanded them, exclaimed: "One step further, and I shoot you!" Goguelat spurred his horse against him, and received two shots,—two slight wounds; one of the bullets having struck him on the collar-bone, made him drop the rein, lose his balance, and fall from his horse. However, he was able to arise; but the hussars were, from that moment, on the side of the people. Their attention had been directed to a few small cannons, at the end of the street, which seemed ready to fire on them; so they thought they were between two fires; but those rusty old cannon were not loaded, being totally unfit for use.

Goguelat, though wounded, returned, without complaining, to the chamber of the royal family, which offered a heart-breaking spectacle, at once ignoble and tragical. The dread they felt at their desperate situation had disheartened the king and the queen, and even visibly weakened their minds. They were entreating Sauce and his wife, as if those poor people had been able to do anything in the affair. The queen, seated on a bench, between two boxes of candles, was endeavouring to appeal to the kind feeling of the grocer's wife: "Madam," said she to her, "have you not children, a husband, and a family of your own?" To which the other simply replied, in a very few words: "I wish it was in my power to help you; but, bless me! you are thinking of the king, and I am thinking of M. Sauce: every woman for her own husband." The queen turned away furious, and shedding tears in her rage, astonished that this woman, who was unable to save her, should refuse to ruin herself for her, and sacrifice to her her husband and family.

The king seemed to have lost his senses. M. Deslons, the officer who commanded the first post after Varennes, having obtained leave to reach his presence, informed him that M. de Bouillé, having received notice, was doubtless about to arrive with assistance; but the king did not appear to hear him. He repeated the same thing three times over, and seeing that he did not appear to understand it, "I entreat your majesty," said he, "to give me your orders for M. de Bouille." "I have no longer any orders to give, sir," replied the king: "I am a prisoner. Tell him that I beg him to do what he can for me."

Many people, indeed, much afraid lest he should arrive, wanted to



remove the kiug, and shouts of "Back to Paris !" began to be heard. In order to tranquillise the multitude, he was recommended to show himself at the window. Day had already begun to dawn, and the morning light now illumined the melancholy scene. The king, dressed as a valet, and appearing on the balcony, in his vile unpowdered, undressed wig, with his pale fat face and livid thick lips, speechless, aghast, and expressing no idea—was an object of extreme surprise for the crowd below. First, a deep silence testified the struggle that was taking place in every bosom, between the heart and the mind. Next, pity prevailed, and tears, the true heart of France, began to flow, and to such a degree, that several of those furious men exclaimed : "*Vive le Roi !*"

The grocer's old grandmother, having obtained leave to enter, was heart-broken on beholding the two children sleeping innocently together on the family bed ; she fell upon her knees, and, sobbing, asked permission to kiss their hands : she gave them her blessing, and withdrew in tears.

It was truly a piteous spectacle, and enough to affect the most obdurate and hostile hearts. Yes, even an inhabitant of Liege would have wept : even Liege, Leopold's captive, so barbarously treated by the Austrian soldiers, would have wept over Louis XVI.

Such was the strange and fantastical situation of affairs : the Revolution, a captive of the kings in Europe, holds kings captive in France.

Nay, why say the situation was strange ? No, the retribution was just.

Weak-minded that we are ! What was the most surprising in the scene at Varennes was, at the same time, the most natural ; what seemed to be an unprecedented change and a wonderful overthrow, was merely a return to truth.

This disguise, which appeared so unseemly, placed Louis XVI. in the private condition for which he was formed. Judging from his natural abilities, he was calculated to become, doubtless, not a valet,—for he was educated and accomplished,—but the servant of some great family, a tutor or a steward, dispensed, as a servant, from every kind of initiative ; he would have been a punctual and upright clerk, or a well-informed, strictly moral, and conscientious tutor, as far, however, as bigotry admits. A servant's costume was his most appropriate dress ; he had, till then, been disguised in the inappropriate insignia of royalty.

But whilst we are meditating, time is passing : and the sun is already far above the horizon. Ten thousand men pour into Varennes, and the small chamber in which the royal family is assembled, though facing the garden, trembles at the loud and confused uproar arising from the street. The door opens, and they behold an officer of the National Guard of Paris,—a man of a gloomy countenance, evidently fatigued, but agitated and excited,—wearing plain unpowdered hair, and a coat *décolleté*. He stammers out a few broken sentences :—"Sire," says he, "you know . . . All Paris is being murdered . . . Our wives and children are, perhaps, assassinated ; you shall not go further . . . Sire . . . The interest of the State . . . Yes, Sire, . . . our wives and children !"

At those words, the queen grasped his hand, and pointing to the dauphin and the princess royal, who, exhausted with fatigue, were asleep on

the grocer's bed : "Am I not also a mother ?" said she to him—"In short, what do you want ?" said the king to him.—"Sire, a decree of the Assembly . . ."—"Where is it, then ?" said the king.—"My comrade has it," returned the other.—The door opened again, and we beheld M. de Romeuf leaning against the window in the outer room, greatly agitated, weeping, and holding a paper in his hand. He came forward with downcast eyes. "What, sir, is it you ? Oh ! I would never have believed it possible !" said the queen. The king snatched the decree out of his hand, read it, and exclaimed :—"There is no longer any king in France." The queen read it over, and the king, taking it again, read it once more, and then laid it on the bed where the children were sleeping ; but the queen flung it indignantly from the bed, exclaiming :—"It shall not defile my children." Then arose a general murmur among the municipal authorities and the inhabitants present, as if something holy had just been profaned. I hastily picked up the decree and laid it on the table" (Choiseul).

But what was M. de Bouillé doing ? How was it he did not arrive ? After having been successively warned by his son, by the petty officer of hussars from Varennes, and afterwards by the pressing messengers sent by Deslons and Choiseul, why did he not rapidly ride over that short distance of eight leagues ?

How was it ? he himself asks, and proves perfectly well that it was out of his power. He was so little sure of the few troops he possessed, and saw himself surrounded by so many *dangerous* towns, (to use his own language),—being menaced by Verdun, Metz, Stenay, and on all sides,—that, after having gone a short distance to meet the king, he had hastily returned to make sure of his soldiers, fearing every moment to be abandoned by them.

He kept with him his surest officer, Louis de Bouillé, his eldest son ; but being reduced to their own individual exertions to carry off the best affected regiment in the army,—which was *Royal-Allemand*, in fact, the only one that remained,—they could not get it armed in less than two or three hours, in that terrible night every minute of which was perhaps deciding a century. This regiment, fired by their fervent language, bribed, and paid at the rate of several *louis* for every man, galloped rapidly over the eight leagues, through a revolted country, swarming with armed men, in fact in a hostile land, where a retreat was extremely doubtful. They met with one of their messengers. "Well ?" said they.—"The king has departed from Varennes !" Bouillé pulled his helmet over his brow, swore, and dashed his spurs into the flanks of his horse. The next moment, the man saw them all disappear like a hurricane.

At length they arrived at Varennes. It was impossible to pass ; the whole of the road was barricaded. They found out a ford, and crossed the river ; beyond, was a canal ; and they were trying to cross it, when fresh information rendered the task unnecessary. They could no longer entertain any hope of rejoining the king. The Germans were beginning to complain that their horses were completely exhausted ; and the garrison of Verdun was marching against them in battle array.

Young Louis de Bouillé, in relating this last hour when his father was

flying, sword in hand, in pursuit of the royal hostage, exclaims, with an impulse of youthful ardour : " We rushed, with that small band, into France armed as she was against us."

Yes, it was most truly France. But what was that galloping troop of Germans,—what was Bouillé who commanded them, and the king whom they were leading away ? It was Rebellion.

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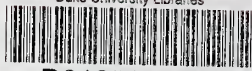
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